

Sebastopol Regional Branch
Sonoma County Library
7140 Bodega Avenue
Sebastopol, California 95472

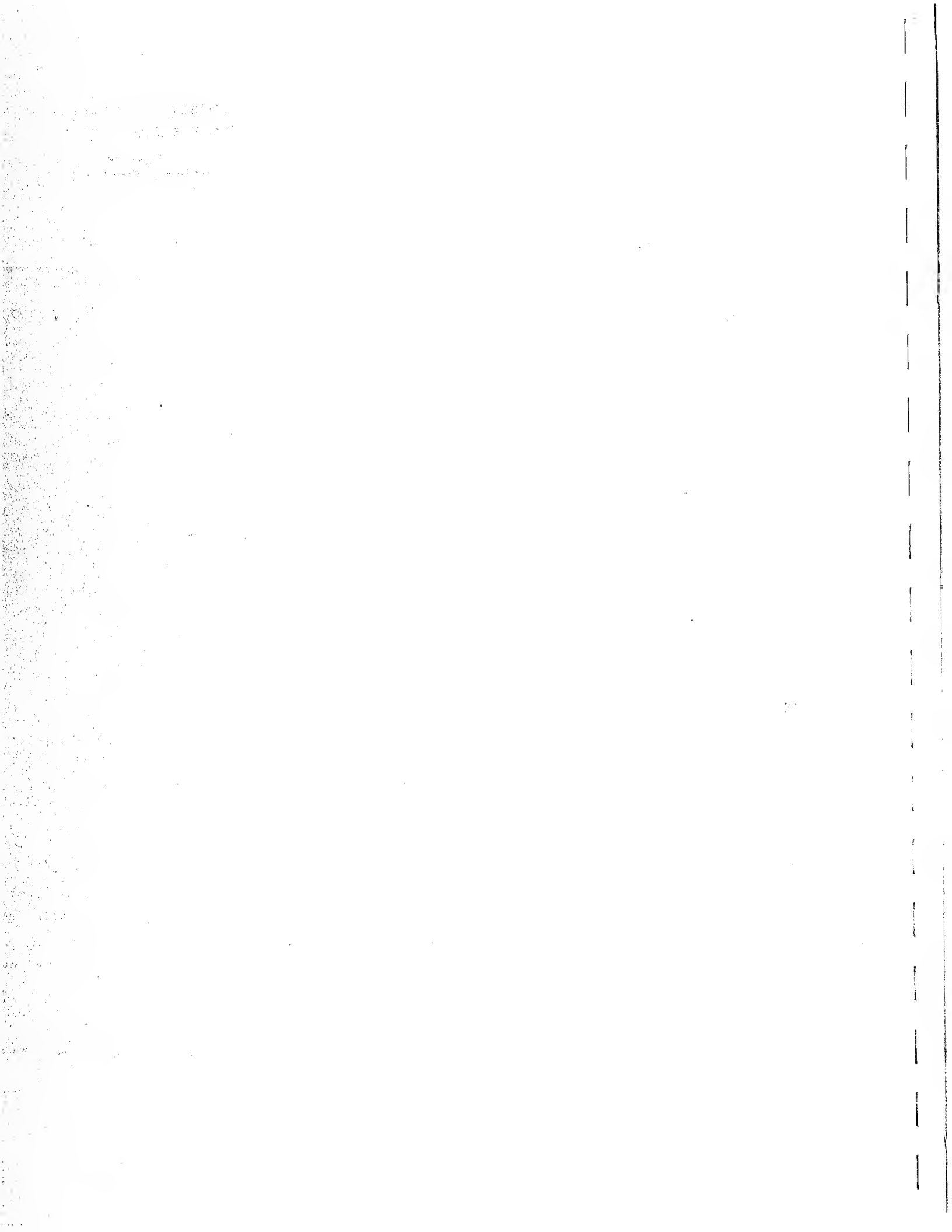
**RAGLE RANCH REGIONAL PARK
OFF-LEASH DOG PARK AREA**
Sonoma County, California

Draft Initial Study

July 2004

Prepared for:
Sonoma County Regional Parks
2300 County Center Drive, Suite 120 A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
707/565-2041

Prepared by:
Brelje & Race Engineers
5570 Skylane Blvd.
Santa Rosa CA 95403
707/576-1322





SONOMA
COUNTY
REGIONAL
PARKS

JIM R. ANGELO
DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM

Sebastopol Regional Branch
Sonoma County Library
7140 Bodega Avenue
Sebastopol, California 95472

DATE: July 29, 2004

TO: Reference Librarian
Sonoma County Library – Sebastopol Branch

FROM: Michelle Julene, Environmental Specialist *mj*

**RE: RABLE RANCH REGIONAL PARK
OFF LEASH DOG AREA PROJECT**

The purpose of this Memorandum is to transmit five copies of the Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration and Initial Study for the proposed Ragle Ranch Regional Park Off Leash Dog Area Project (Project). One copy of the document are being sent to the Central Branch Library.

The comment period for this document is **August 02 – September 03, 2004**. Regional Parks would appreciate receiving written comments regarding the project and the document by September 03, 2004, 2004.

Please have this document available for the public.

Please call me at 565-3962 or e-mail at mjulene@sonoma-county.org if you have questions regarding this correspondence.

Thank you.

mj:mj

2300

County Center Drive

Suite 120A

Santa Rosa

CA 95403

Tel: 707 565-2041

Fax: 707 579-8247

www.sonoma-county.org/parks

Enc. Notice of Intent to Adopt A Mitigated Declaration
Draft Initial Study

SEBASTOPOL

11/20/04

NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

SONOMA COUNTY REGIONAL PARKS
PHONE: (707) 565-2041

2300 COUNTY CENTER DRIVE, SUITE 120a

SANTA ROSA, CA 95403
FAX: (707) 565-3642

An Initial Study of environmental impact has been prepared by the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department and considered by the Sonoma County Environmental Review Committee for the following project:

August 02, 2004

RAGLE RANCH REGIONAL PARK – OFF LEASH DOG AREA

PROJECT LOCATION: The proposed project is located at 500 Ragle Road, Sebastopol.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The proposed off-leash dog area will include a three-to-four-foot high black vinyl coated cyclone fence with a double gated entry to prevent dogs from exiting the area uncontrolled would be constructed, garbage and dog waste disposal containers, potable water, irrigation, signage at the entrance stating rules of use and owner responsibilities.

PROJECT PURPOSE: The Friends of the Dog Park have requested development of an off-leash dog area at Ragle Park. The off-leash dog area would allow dog owners to recreate with their dogs within Ragle Park without leash constraints and provide a social setting for off-leash dog interactions.

FINDING: On the basis of the Initial Study and the recommendation of the Sonoma County Environmental Review Committee, the Park Planning and Design Administrator of the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department has determined that with the incorporation of the mitigation measures proposed in the Initial Study, the proposed project would not have a significant adverse effect on the environment.

COMMENT PERIOD: The proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration is available for review and comment, along with the Master Plan and Initial Study, at the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department. Written comments should be addressed to Michelle Julene, Environmental Specialist at Sonoma County Regional Parks. The address and phone number are listed above. The posting and review period for the Proposed Negative Declaration is:

August 02 – September 03, 2004

PUBLIC MEETINGS: The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors (Board) is the decision-making body responsible for adopting the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and approving the proposed project. The meeting has not yet been scheduled.

Please call Michelle Julene at the number listed above if you have questions regarding this Notice.

Posting and mailing date: August 02, 2004

RAGLE RANCH REGIONAL PARK
OFF-LEASH DOG PARK AREA
Sonoma County, California

Draft Initial Study

July 2004

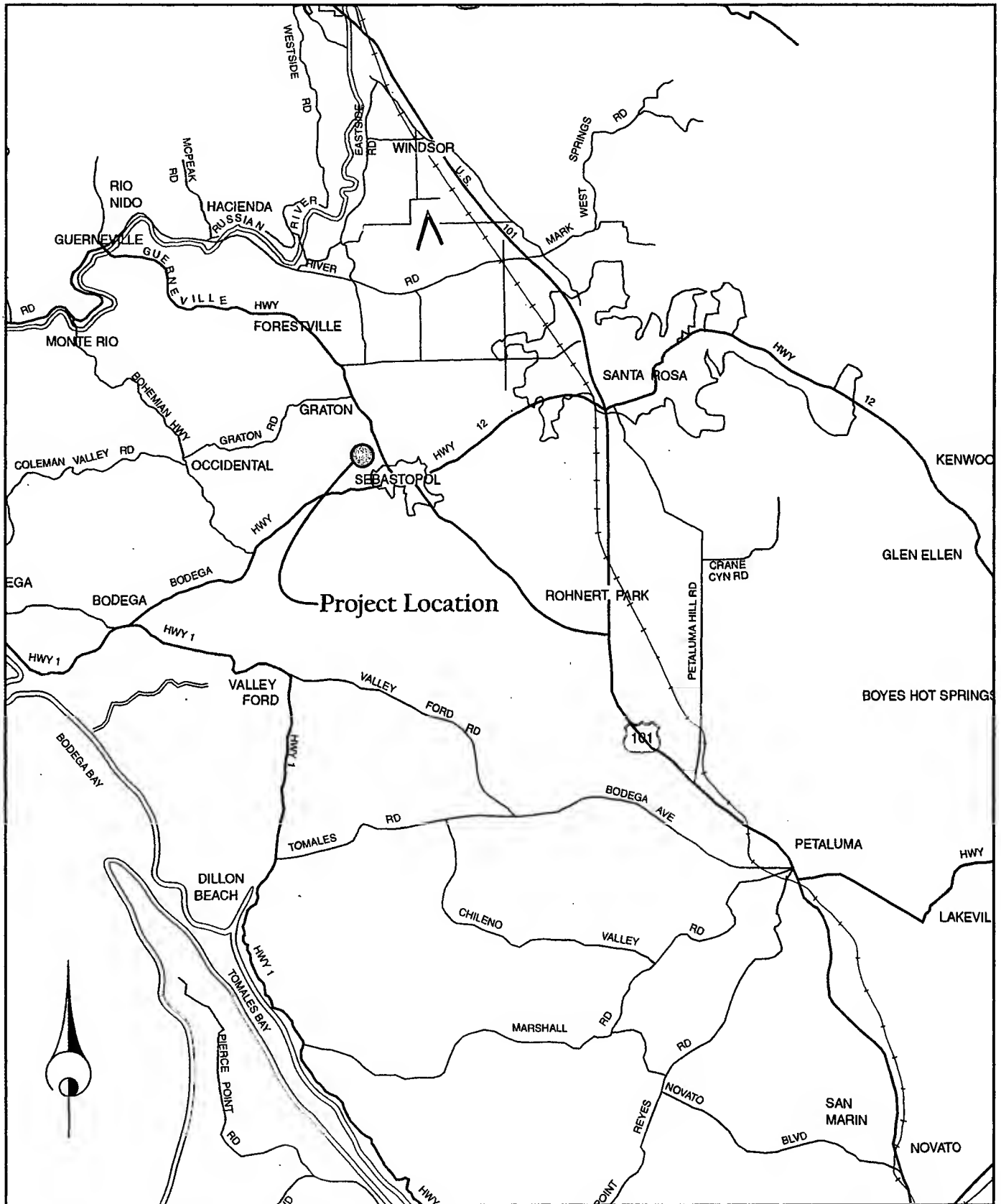
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Ragle Ranch Regional Park
County of Sonoma, California

Date: July 2004
Job #: 2660

W/RPT/2260/2660-030501FIG1.A1

Regional Location Map

Figure 1



Project Location

W/RPT/2260/2660-030501FIG2.A1

Figure 2

GENERAL OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

Ragle Park is open during daylight hours only, no overnight camping will be allowed. The Regional Parks rangers and maintenance staff would provide standard enforcement and maintenance services, such as:

- Opening and closing the park
- Emptying garbage cans
- Cleaning restrooms
- Mowing for fire protection (twice a year)
- Mowing for landscape maintenance, as needed
- Landscape and irrigation system maintenance
- General facility maintenance
- Monitoring parking areas for payment of fees
- Monitoring facility for general compliance with park rules
- Coordination with Sonoma County Sheriff Department, as needed

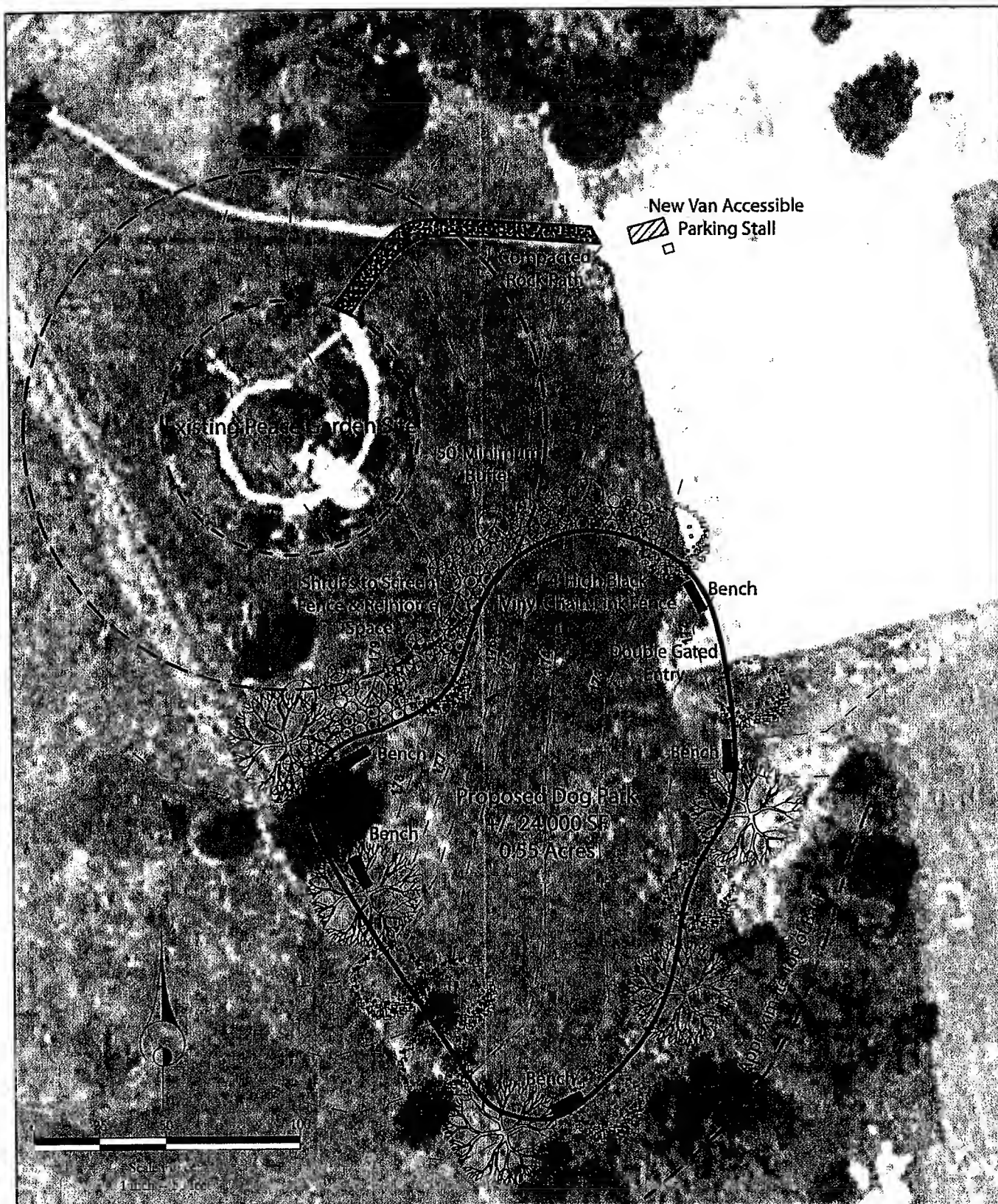
Regional Parks encourages volunteers and outside organizations to assist in service projects and other activities. Volunteers can assist as trail walkers to interpret park regulations and to report hazards, vandalism, and other problems. Youth or adult groups and organizations may volunteer to assist with park construction projects and trail building.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed Ragle Ranch off-leash dog area will include the following recreational features: A three to four-foot high black vinyl coated cyclone fence with a double gated entry to prevent dogs from exiting the area uncontrolled would be constructed. All facilities would be constructed outside of the dripline of any existing trees to avoid potential impacts to trees and to exclude existing poison oak. Water service would be extended to the site for owners and dogs. If watering basins are to be provided, periodic draining of the basins would occur to minimize mosquito propagation. Facilities would be provided for the collection and disposal of dog waste. A sign would be posted at the entrance stating rules of use and owner responsibilities. Native ground cover would be maintained and Regional Parks would mow the site several times per year to minimize fire dangers. Irrigation would be extended to the off-leash dog area to provide summer irrigation.

The preferred site is located at the Alternative 5 site located at the southwesterly end of the developed portion of the park, east of the Peace Garden. The proposed Alternative 5 site plan is shown in Figure 3. The approximately 0.5 acre site is slopes gently (5 percent to 7.5 percent slope) to the south with no existing trees. The slope increases to 12-15 percent at the southerly edge of the enclosure. Access to Alternative 5 would be via the existing parking lot on its east side. A 50-foot average setback will be maintained from the riparian corridor to the south of Alternative 5.

Alternative 5 was proposed because it is located in a relatively open area in the vicinity of developed uses and a parking area. This site would be irrigated during the summer to reduce potential soil disturbance impacts such as dust. This site received some opposition because of potential conflicts with the existing Peace Garden site and its proximity to an existing creek and riparian area. The Initial Study did not identify potentially significant environmental impacts associated with this alternative site.



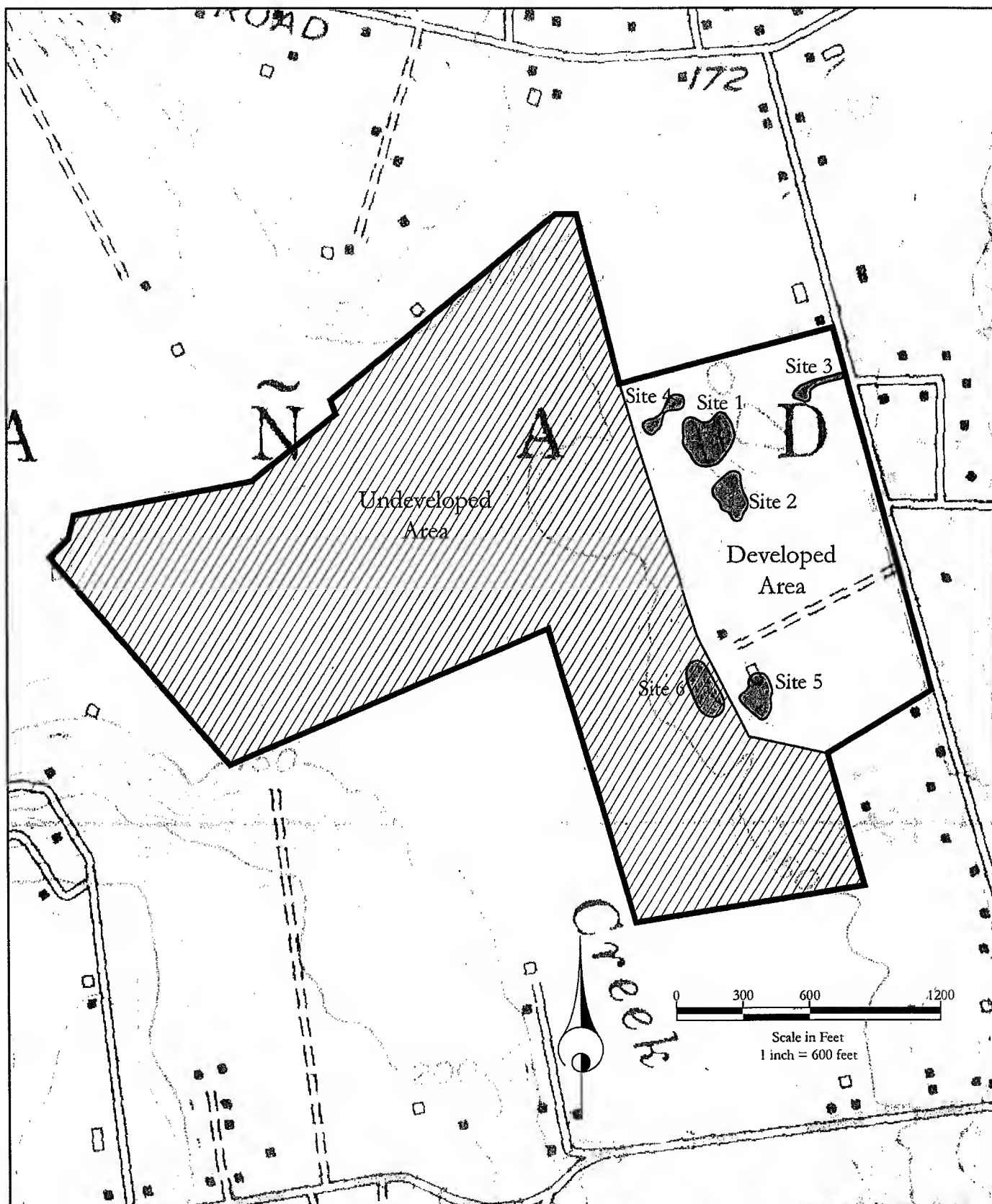
Brelje & Race
CONSULTING CIVIL ENGINEERS
3570 SKYLANE BLVD. SANTA ROSA CA 95403 707/576-1322

Ragle Ranch Regional Park
County of Sonoma, California

Date: July 2004
Job #: 2660
RFT\2660\2660-040422FIG3.AI

Site 5: Preferred Site Plan

Figure 3



Brelje & Race
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5570 SKYLANE BLVD. SANTA ROSA CA 95403 707/576-1322

Ragle Ranch Regional Park
County of Sonoma, California

Date: July 2004
Job #: 2660

W/RPT/2260/2660-030501FIG4.A1

Alternative Site Locations

Figure 4



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Ragle Ranch Regional Park
County of Sonoma, California

Date: July 2004
Job #: 2660

W:\RPT\2260\2660-03\501FIG5.A1

Alternative Off-leash Dog Area Locations

Figure 5

Alternative 5 is recommended as the preferred site because it is located in an open area, has immediate access to parking, water service is available near the site, it received significant public support relative to the other alternative sites, and would have less potential conflicts with existing uses at the park. Input has been received from the Peace Garden proponents indicating that, while they are not happy about the location, the dog area could be acceptable as long as the adjoining boundary was complimentary, planting was conducted to provide visual screening and the dog area could be closed for special occasion reservations of the Peace Garden made through Regional Parks. These elements have been incorporated into the project to ensure compatibility with the Peace Garden.

ALTERNATIVE SITES CONSIDERED

Five additional alternative locations have been identified by Regional Parks for the off-leash dog area as shown of Figures 4 and 5. Alternative sites 1 through 5 all have similar physical environmental impacts based on CEQA criteria. Public comment, therefore, is an influence in the recommendation of alternative sites for further consideration. Potentially significant environmental impacts were identified with Alternative Site 6. As a result, Site 6 has been removed from further consideration.

Appropriate size for an off-leash dog area is another influence in the recommendation of alternative sites for further consideration. Extensive research regarding this criterion was conducted during preparation of the Initial Study. This research did not reveal any adopted or universally accepted guidelines associated with size of off-leash dog areas. There are a number of off-leash dog areas that are as small as 0.25 acre and several that are over 1.0 acre in size. Public comment associated with the proposed project indicated concern regarding the smaller sites, specifically that the smaller alternative sites would result in a higher concentration of dogs and would therefore result in more impacts to soil disturbance, erosion, and dust. Due to the lack of adopted or universally accepted guidelines regarding appropriate size of off-leash dog areas, this criterion is given relative consideration in the recommendation of alternative sites for further consideration.

Alternative 1 is the site originally proposed by the project proponents, the Friends of the Ragle Dog Park (Friends). The site is approximately 1.0 acre in size and is in an oak savannah habitat type, including native and non-native grasses and wildflowers, surrounded most prominently by coast live oak and redwood trees. The site is located on a gentle slope overlooking a viewshed. The site is located in the general location of the existing paved loop path, within the designated developed area of Ragle Park. Alternative 1 would require extension of a pathway for approximately 70 feet to provide access to the site.

This site was proposed by the Friends for several reasons including the size of the clearing, its location within the developed area of the park, and its proximity to the existing paved loop path. Those opposed to this site express concerns regarding potential impacts to aesthetics, plants and wildlife, soil erosion, land-use, and potential conflicts with the existing park Master Plan.

Alternative 1 could be recommended for further consideration for the proposed off-leash dog area with the provisions that only half of the site, or approximately 0.5 acre, is utilized at any give time for the proposed use. The un-used half would be fenced off so that soil and plants can rest and recover. Additionally, Alternative 1 is used for the Gravenstein Apple Fair one weekend a year. The off-leash dog area would be closed for dog use during the Apple Fair.

Alternative 2 is located in a clearing in the oak woodland area and is approximately 0.6 acre in size. This location is relatively more flat than Alternative 1. It is located approximately 50 feet north of the group picnic ground. Alternative 2 is also used by Gravenstein Apple Fair staff for parking and would be similarly closed during that time. Access to Alternative 2 would require extension of a pathway for approximately 100 feet.

Alternative 2 was proposed for consideration because it is similar in size and shape to Alternative 1 and it is located further away from the existing paved loop trail and would have less potential impact to existing land use. Those opposed to this site expressed concerns regarding potential impacts to plants and wildlife, soil erosion, and compatibility with the existing nearby group picnic area and children's playground.

Alternative 2 is not recommended for further consideration because of the potential conflict with the existing use as part of the group picnic area reservation.

Alternative 3 is located between the tennis courts and softball diamond. It is approximately 0.2 acre in size and would be graded to relatively flat. The existing pathway that cuts through the site would be removed. There is ample access to Alternative 3 from the existing paved loop trail.

Alternative 3 was proposed because it is located in the developed portion of the park, between two existing developed uses (tennis courts and athletic field), easy access from the existing paved loop trail, lack of established oak woodland vegetation, and less wildlife activity than the other sites. Alternative 3 received more support during the NOP process and Scoping Meeting for these reasons. Some people opposed Alternative 3 due to its small size, because the higher concentration of dogs in the small area could result in greater potential impacts to soil disturbance and dust. The Friends opposed the use of this site due to its small size.

Alternative 3 could be recommended for further consideration, despite its small size, because it is located within the designated active area of the park between two developed uses, access from the paved loop trail, and substantial public support. This site could be turfed and/or irrigated without impacting existing native oak trees, which would reduce potential impacts from soil disturbance such as dust generation.

Alternative 4 is at the northwest end of the oak woodland within the developed portion of the park. It is approximately 0.3 acre in size and slopes gently to the west. Alternative 4 is easily accessed from an existing paved loop trail. Alternative 4 was proposed because it includes open areas that could be utilized for the proposed use, access from the existing paved loop trail, and lack of potential conflicts with existing uses at the park. This site received opposition due to its irregular shape, proximity to existing native vegetation, and potential for wetter soils during the winter season.

Alternative 4 is not recommended for further consideration because of its irregular shape, wetter soils, and lack of public support.

A brief discussion of the **No Project Alternative** is included in this Initial Study. Although not required by CEQA at an Initial Study level of analysis, the No Project Alternative would have the effect of maintaining the status quo, with no off-leash dog park being developed. Ragle Park would continue to operate its existing recreational facilities and dog owners could continue to utilize the park with dogs on-leash. Impacts to this alternative are discussed in the Recreation section of this Initial Study.

DISMISSED ALTERNATIVE

Alternative 6 is located west of the Peace Garden. It is an approximately 0.8 acre portion of the grassland that slopes to the west. Access to Alternative 6 would be via the existing parking lot to the east. Alternative 6 is outside of the developed portion of Ragle Park.

Alternative 6 was proposed because it is located in an open area and away from existing mature vegetation, including riparian and oak plant savannah communities. This alternative site received opposition because it is located in the undeveloped area of the park and potential security issues. In addition, Alternative 6 is not located in close proximity to an existing paved path.

Alternative 6 has been removed from further consideration because it is located in the undeveloped portion of the park. No mitigation measures could be identified to reduce the potentially significant impacts associated with Site 6 to a less than significant level.

POLICY SETTING

Ragle Park is within the County of Sonoma and is under the jurisdiction of the County's General Plan and zoning ordinance. Additional development guidance is provided by the County's Ragle Ranch Park Master

Plan¹ (Master Plan). Prepared in May 1982, the Master Plan roughly divides Ragle Park into a 40-acre developed area (eastern portion) and the remaining 116 acres as an undeveloped open space area. The Master Plan includes objectives for recreation, habitat preservation and habitat enhancement. The Master Plan was amended in 1993 to include the addition of 55 paved parking spaces, four unlit tennis courts and an additional baseball/soccer field.

Prior to adoption of the Master Plan, an Initial Study was conducted to assess potential environmental impacts from implementation of a regional park at Ragle Ranch. The Initial Study included supplemental studies including a biological assessment, a cultural resources assessment, an analysis of impacts to groundwater and traffic impacts.

If Regional Parks selects one of the alternative locations considered by this Initial Study for development of the proposed dog area, the Master Plan would need to be amended. This Initial Study would satisfy the CEQA requirement for such an amendment.

OTHER DOG PARK EXPERIENCES

To better assess potential environmental impacts and issues associated with off-leash dog parks, the public agencies and/or volunteer organizations associated with 12 dog parks were surveyed by phone to determine general park characteristics, successes and failures. Direct questions regarding safety, noise, dust, odors and erosion were used to better address such issues in this Initial Study. A summary of the surveys can be found in Appendix A.

In general, parks surveyed ranged in size from 0.25 acre to 9 acres in size. Most were within existing turfed parks and are fully fenced. Only one park reported any problems with erosion, dust and odor. Three parks reported minor safety issues associated with dogs utilizing the off-leash dog area although no bites were reported.

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) was prepared for this project. While not required for an Initial Study by CEQA, a NOP is an excellent way to obtain input from the public and Responsible Agencies. The NOP period extended from September 8, 2003, through October 10, 2003 and included a public scoping session at Ragle Park on September 25, 2003. A summary of comments received during the NOP period is presented below. All comments have been incorporated into this Initial Study, where appropriate. All comments are available for review in Appendix B.

Index Letter	Comment	Number of Comments
A	Comment of a general nature, no environmental issues raised.	6
B	Statement of personal opinion either supporting or opposing the dog park.	13
C	Statement of concern related to riparian resources.	5
D	Statement of concern regarding impacts to wildlife.	44
E	Statement of concern related to oak woodland, wildflowers, or other plant life.	37
F	Statement of concern regarding aesthetics, tranquility.	38

¹ Master Plan Ragle Ranch Park, County of Sonoma. May 1982. Sonoma County Regional Parks. Includes Management Plan and Initial Study prepared by The Planning Collaborative. May 1982.

G	Statement of concern regarding noise impacts.	21
H	Statement of concern regarding safety issues involving dogs running loose, biting, failure to obey rules, liability issues, etc.	18
I	Statements of concern regarding the proposed project's consistency with the Ragle Ranch Master Plan and other land use compatibility issues within the park; concern regarding the loss of useable parkland; potential conflict with the Apple Blossom Fair.	44
J	Statement of concern regarding water quality issues.	6
K	Statement of concern regarding odors and other impacts associated with dog feces and urine.	19
L	Statement of concern regarding soil erosion, dust, and sedimentation.	16
M	Statement of concern regarding potential mosquito propagation.	1
N	Statement of concern regarding the presence of poison oak.	1
O	Statement of concern regarding sloping conditions on various sites.	2
P	Suggested use of a turf surface (including irrigation).	12
Q	Statement of concern regarding traffic and parking conditions within the park; concern regarding enforcement of traffic regulations on public streets surrounding the park.	2
R	Statement of concern regarding public services.	1
S	Statement of concern regarding animal waste in the neighborhoods that adjoin the park.	1
T	Suggestion of alternative dog park sites both inside Ragle Ranch Park and at locations elsewhere outside the park.	8
U	Statement of concern related to potential archaeological site(s).	6
V	Statement of concern related to impacts resulting from the lack of off-leash dog park areas.	3
W	Statement of concern regarding the adequacy of the sizes of the various alternative dog park sites.	12
X	Statement of support for one or more alternative sites; no environmental issues raised.	3

OTHER PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVALS

No public agency approvals have been identified.

ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE CHECKLIST:

The following list of questions is provided by Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, in order to determine a project's environmental impacts. The checklist utilized herein was updated by the State of California in 1999.

Based on the project description, answers to the questions fall into one of four categories:

- Potentially Significant Impact (PS)
- Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporation (LSM)
- Less Than Significant Impact (LS)
- No Impact (NI)

With regard to the checklist, a "No Impact" response indicates that no impact would result from implementation of the project. A "Less Than Significant Impact" response indicates that an impact would occur, but the level of impact would be less than significant. A "Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation" response indicates that an impact is involved, and, with implementation of the identified mitigation measure, such impact would be less than significant. A "Potentially Significant Impact" response indicates that there is substantial evidence that impacts may be significant if mitigation measures are unknown, infeasible, or not proposed. Each response is discussed at a level of detail commensurate with the potential for adverse environmental effect.

The discussion following each checklist item consists of an *Analysis* section, a *Cumulative Impacts* discussion, and a section for identification of *Mitigation Measures*, as necessary. The *Analysis* section includes a discussion addressing whether the project would result in potential adverse environmental impacts. All potential impacts have been considered, including on-site and off-site impacts, direct and indirect impacts, construction and operation-related effects, as well as cumulative effects. The recently updated CEQA Guidelines contain revised regulations relative to the project's potential for contributing to cumulative effects². The *Cumulative Impacts* section presents information regarding the project's potential cumulative impacts and is included in this section. If an impact(s) has been identified and mitigation is identified to reduce the impact to a less than significant level, then such measures are contained in the *Mitigation Measures* section.

² California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, §15064(i).
Brefje & Race Civil Engineers
Initial Study

I AESTHETICS

Analysis

a. **Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?**

LS Alternatives 1-5: The project will not have a significant impact to scenic vistas. For most alternate locations, views of the area will be limited from within the park and will not be significantly visible from outside of the park. Alternative 1 will be clearly visible from the top of the hill to its east, but is within the developed portion of the park and not characteristic of a scenic vista. Impacts to scenic vistas will be less than significant.

b. **Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?**

NI The project is not visible from a state scenic highway.

c. **Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?**

Analysis of a project's impact to the existing visual character of a site and surroundings can be tenuous and subjective. Regional Parks has not adopted any thresholds of significance for assessing visual impacts for projects of this nature. Any of the project alternative locations will involve construction of a fence and a change of existing use. Both consist of visual alterations of existing conditions. In such cases, it is necessary to consider the surrounding visual character and, where available, the planning documents (i.e., Ragle Ranch Park Master Plan) that generally describe the intended use of the area.

LS Alternative 1: This location would alter existing conditions by construction of a fence and a change in use. The site is visible from the hill to its east, from the path to the north and from the open area to the south. Use of the site by dogs would likely result in diminished wild flower displays due to trampling of the vegetation. The site would be primarily visible to people walking along the adjacent portion of the looped path. Given that this site is located within the active portion of the park and the relatively limited change in the visual character, this impact is considered to be less than significant.

LS Alternative 2: Alternative 2 is located northerly of the group picnic area and will be visible from the picnic area and the playground area to the east. Visibility of the location will be screened by existing vegetation from most other areas. This site is also within the active portion of the park. In terms of its visual characteristics, the dog park would be relatively consistent with the visual character of this area and is considered to be less than significant.

LS Alternative 3: This site is located between the existing tennis courts and little league field, west of Ragle Road. Placement of the dog park at this location would require the removal of an existing soil stockpile. However, given the existing level of development in the vicinity of the site, the dog park would be relatively consistent with the visual character of this area and is considered to be less than significant.

LS Alternative 4: Located at the northern end of the looped path, Alternative 4 is generally only visible from the adjacent portion of the path and the equestrian parking facility. As with Alternatives 1 and 2, construction of a fence and change in use is the primary visual impact. Given that this site is located within the active portion of the park and the limited change in the visual character, this impact is considered to be less than significant.

LSM Alternative 5: Alternative 5 is located to the west of the southern parking lot, adjacent to the Peace Garden. Similar to Alternative 3, this site is clearly within the developed area of the park. This site would be clearly visible from the Peace Garden. The Peace Garden proponents have stated their preference for Alternative 6 over this location if the dog area is located adjacent to the Peace Garden. This may pose a significant visual impact to users of the Peace Garden. Planting is proposed between the Peace Garden and the dog area to provide visual screening. Mitigation Measure A1 is included to ensure that such planting is successful, lessening this impact to a less than significant level. In terms of being a developed facility (as opposed to a natural undeveloped site), the dog park would be relatively consistent with the visual character of other active uses in this area and the impact is considered to be less than significant.

- d. **Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?**

NI No lighting is proposed at any of the alternative locations. The project will not alter existing light and glare conditions in the vicinity of the project.

Cumulative Impacts

There are no adverse cumulative environmental impacts to aesthetic resources resulting from implementation of the proposed project.

Mitigation Measures

- A1** To minimize visual impacts to the Peace Garden, planting is included in the project to create a visual screen between the Peace Garden and the off-leash dog area. Such planting must be maintained and irrigated until established to ensure success of the visual screening.

II AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Analysis

- a. Would the project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

NI The project area is a developed regional park and does not support agriculture.

- b. Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

NI The project area is not zoned for agricultural use and no Williamson Act contract exists on the project's parcel.

- c. Would the project involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?

NI Based on the location of the project, no conversion of Farmland will occur.

Cumulative Impacts

There are no adverse cumulative environmental impacts to agricultural resources resulting from implementation of the proposed project.

Mitigation Measures

No adverse environmental impacts to agricultural resources have been identified; therefore, no mitigation is required.

III AIR QUALITY

The project site is located within the jurisdiction of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), a State governmental agency established by the California Legislature in 1955 which regulates sources of air pollution within the San Francisco Bay Area air basin (Bay Area). The BAAQMD monitors, regulates and reports on air quality in the cities and unincorporated areas throughout all or portions of the nine counties which comprise the Bay Area. The northern district boundary is located approximately half-way between Windsor and Healdsburg, and includes the southern portion of Sonoma County, including the project site.

The BAAQMD has a network of air monitoring stations measuring ozone and other pollutants throughout the Bay Area. During summer months, the Bay Area experiences hot, stagnant weather. This can lead to exceedances of the 1-hour standard for ozone which forms in the lower atmosphere as a result of nitrous oxide, a component of vehicle exhaust, and sunlight.

Despite the hot weather and high ozone levels of 1998, monitoring data show a general downward trend in ozone levels since the late 1980's. The region's air quality conditions continue to show generally clean air, with occasional exceedances of the national ozone standard, somewhat more frequent exceedances of the more stringent State standard, and overall improvement with year-to-year fluctuations due mainly to varying meteorology.

The Bay Area Air Pollution Summary for 2002 indicates that the district monitoring stations measured exceedances in ozone, PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀. However, the Santa Rosa air quality monitoring station did not record any exceedances of ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide or PM_{2.5} PM₁₀³. The Santa Rosa monitoring station recorded 2 exceedances of PM₁₀⁴.

Analysis

a. Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

NI The project will not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the BAAQMD air quality plan. The project consists of an off-leash dog use area within a developed park and will not impact long-term air quality.

b. Would the project violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?

NI The project will not violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation. The project consists of an off-leash dog use area and will not impact air quality.

³ Bay Area Air Pollution Summary—2002. BAAQMD. <http://www.baaqmd.gov/pio/aqsummaries/pollsum02.pdf>

⁴ Ambient Air Quality Standards & Bay Area Attainment Status. Updated 1/03. BAAQMD.

<http://www.baaqmd.gov/pln/ambientairquality.asp>.

- c. **Would the project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?**

NI As an off-leash dog area, the project will not result in an increase of any criteria pollutant in the area. Ragle Park is an existing park and implementation of the project is not expected to produce a significant increase in vehicular traffic to and from the park.

- d. **Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?**

LS The project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants. The project will not result in the production or release of pollutants. However, soils in the area are fine and dog activity may result in localized dust. This is discussed further under the Geology and Soils section of this Initial Study.

- e. **Would the project create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?**

LS Use of the off-leash dog area will certainly result in the concentration of dog feces in that area. The project description includes provision for pickup and disposal of fecal matter at the dog area (owner's responsibility) and Regional Parks staff will be responsible for collection and disposal of material in the receptacle. A survey of 12 existing dog parks in Sonoma and Marin counties did not report odors as being problematic provided that adequate receptacle pick-up was included in site maintenance. The nearest residence to any of the alternative sites is approximately 150 feet from Site 3. The preferred Site 5 is approximately 375 feet from the nearest residence and 150 feet from the nearest formal picnicking area. Additionally, dogs and dog waste disposal is already occurring within Ragle Park. With adequate disposal of material collected in the receptacle, objectionable odors are expected to be less than significant.

Cumulative Impacts

There are no adverse cumulative environmental impacts to air quality resulting from implementation of the proposed project.

Mitigation Measures

No adverse environmental impacts to air quality have been identified; therefore, no mitigation is required.

IV BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Analysis

- a. **Would the project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?**

As part of the CEQA process prior to adoption of the Master Plan, a biological assessment of the entire park was conducted. No special status species were found in the developed or undeveloped portions of the park.

- NI Alternative 1-5: Development of the off-leash dog area at Alternatives 1 through 5 will include fencing an area within the developed portion of Ragle Park. All locations are currently mowed for fire control. As the proposed location alternatives are already disturbed and subject to intensive human uses, there is no reason to suspect special status species have established themselves during the time period since the biological assessment was originally performed. Two informal botanical surveys by Regional Parks staff have been performed during the last year and did not find any special status species at any of the sites within the developed portion of the park. Lists of special status species maintained by the California Department of Fish & Game and the US Fish & Wildlife Service do not include species compatible with existing habitat at any of the alternative sites. Since there is no suitable habitat for special status species at any of the alternative dog park area locations, the project will not impact special status species.

- b. **Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?**

- LS Alternatives 1, 2 and 4: There is no riparian habitat within these alternative locations. These project alternative locations are within the developed area of Ragle Park. While the Master Plan indicates that these areas are suitable for oak woodland regeneration, no program to commence oak woodland restoration has been undertaken. Currently, these areas are mowed to control fire hazards. Such mowing prevents natural oak regeneration. Implementation of the off-leash dog area at these locations does not alter any planned use of these locations and will have a less than significant impact to any sensitive natural communities defined in the Master Plan. The boundaries of the dog park would exclude areas under the dripline of trees. Therefore, no direct impacts to the oak woodland would occur.

- NI Alternative 3: There is no riparian habitat within this alternative project location. This alternative location is within the developed area of Ragle Park and is not listed as sensitive habitat by the Master Plan. Implementation of the off-leash dog area at this location will not impact any sensitive natural communities.

- LS Alternative 5: This location is within the developed area of Ragle Park and is not listed as sensitive habitat by the Master Plan. A 50-foot average setback from the riparian corridor to the south will be maintained to minimize impacts from potential sediment and nutrients to a less than significant level. Implementation of the off-leash dog area at these locations will not impact any sensitive natural communities.

- c. **Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?**

- NI There are no wetlands within the project alternative locations and no placement of fill is associated with this project.
- d. **Would the project interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?**
- LS The project will not impact fish species. It is possible that wildlife travels through Ragle Park. However, the developed portion of the park is surrounded by residential development to the north, east and south. The undeveloped portion of the park to the west is far more suitable for wildlife habitat and migration and would not be impacted by development of an off-leash dog park to the east.
- All of the project areas could potentially displace gopher habitat used by hunting raptors. It is unlikely that, given the limited extent of displacement, reduction of gophers in the dog area would negatively impact raptors considering the extent of surrounding gopher habitat.
- e. **Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?**
- NI The project will not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. No trees would be removed for implementation of the off-leash dog area and fencing would be located outside of the drip line to minimize impacts to trees. Becky Duckles, certified arborist, has indicated that there is no threat to the trees from dog activity or urine as the dog area will be outside of tree driplines⁵.
- f. **Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?**
- NI There are no such conservation plans in the vicinity of the project.

Cumulative Impacts

There are no adverse cumulative environmental impacts to biological resources resulting from implementation of the proposed project.

Mitigation Measures

No adverse environmental impacts to recreation have been identified; therefore, no mitigation is required.

⁵ Becky Duckles. Personal Communication.
Brefje & Race Civil Engineers
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V CULTURAL RESOURCES

Section 15064.5 of CEQA includes a broad definition of historical and archaeological resources. CEQA defines such resources as: 1) a resource listed in or determined to be eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources; 2) a resource included in a local register of historical resources or identified as significant in an historical resource survey; and/or 3) any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California, provided the determination is supported by substantial evidence, including the following: a) is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage, b) is associated with the lives of persons important in our past, c) embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values, or d) has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history⁶.

Paleontology is the study of fossils—the recognizable remains and traces of once-living, non-human organisms that are incorporated into the Earth's rocks. Shells, bones, leaves, tracks, trails, and a variety of other remains constitute a record of the history of life on the planet dating back 3.5 billion years⁷. Fossils provide the basic data to establish a relative time scale of the physical history of the Earth. Fossils are found in a definite succession in sedimentary and slightly metamorphosed rocks. Fossils are generally most common in rocks formed in relatively shallow marine waters. In freshwater environments, fossils of animals are usually most abundant in rocks formed in lakes. Fossils tend to be least abundant in rocks that formed on dry land because dead plants and animals ordinarily are exposed to the air for long periods of time (precluding fossiliferous formation). Most fossils are relatively small and are collected either by picking up loose specimens on weathered rocks surfaces or by using simple hand tools.

Analysis

- a. **Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?**

LSM A cultural resources investigation⁸ was performed at the time the CEQA document was prepared for the Master Plan. No historical resources were found that would be impacted by the proposed project. However, there is always the potential for accidental discovery of an historical, archaeological or paleontological resource or human remains during construction. In the unlikely event that historical resources are discovered during construction work, Mitigation Measure CR1 will reduce such impact to a less than significant level.

- b. **Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?**

LSM In the cultural resource study for the Master Plan, an archaeological site was identified south of Alternative 5. Obsidian deposits were found in the vicinity of Alternative 1 but were not considered to be an archaeological resource. In the unlikely event that archaeological resources are discovered during construction work, Mitigation Measure CR1 will reduce such impact to a less than significant level. Additionally, County staff will be available to monitor construction in potentially delicate areas.

⁶ California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines. §15064.5(a).

⁷ *Paleontological Collecting*. National Academy Press. Washington, DC. 1987.

⁸ Lynn Eisenman. May 4, 1978. *A Cultural Resource Study of Ragle Ranch Park, Sonoma County, California*. The Anthropology Laboratory, Sonoma State College.

- c. **Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?**

LSM In the unlikely event that a unique paleontological resource is discovered during construction work, Mitigation Measure CR2 will reduce such impact to a less than significant level.

- d. **Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?**

LSM In the unlikely event that human remains are discovered during construction work, Mitigation Measure CR3 will reduce such impact to a less than significant level.

Cumulative Impacts

There are no adverse cumulative environmental impacts to cultural resources resulting from implementation of the proposed project.

Mitigation Measures

CR1 The project plans and specifications shall provide that in the event prehistoric-era or historic-era archaeological site indicators are unearthed during the course of grading, excavation and/or trenching, all ground disturbing work in the vicinity of the discovery shall cease and all exposed materials shall be left in place. Prehistoric-era archaeological site indicators could include chipped chert and obsidian tools and tool manufacture waste flakes, grinding implements such as mortars and pestles, and locally darkened soil containing the previously mentioned items as well as fire altered stone and dietary debris such as bone and shellfish fragments. Historic-era archaeological site indicators could include items of ceramic, glass and metal, and features such as structural ruins, wells and pits containing such artifacts. After cessation of excavation, the contractor shall immediately contact Regional Parks. Regional Parks shall contact a qualified professional archaeologist immediately after the find. Such archaeologist shall conduct an evaluation of significance of the site, and assess the necessity for appropriate mitigation. The contractor shall not resume construction activities until authorization to proceed is received from Regional Parks.

CR2 The project plans and specifications shall provide that in the event paleontological site indicators are unearthed during the course of grading, excavation and/or trenching, all ground disturbing work in the vicinity of the discovery shall cease and all exposed materials shall be left in place. After cessation of excavation, the contractor shall immediately contact Regional Parks. Regional Parks shall contact a qualified professional geologist or paleontologist immediately after the find. Such consultant shall conduct an evaluation of significance of the site, and assess the necessity for appropriate mitigation. The contractor shall not resume construction activities until authorization to proceed is received from Regional Parks.

CR3 If human remains are encountered during grading, excavation or trenching, all construction activity shall cease and the contractor shall immediately contact Regional Parks and the Sonoma County Coroner's Office. If the remains are determined by the Coroner's Office to be of Native American origin, the Native American Heritage Commission shall be contacted and the procedures outlined in CEQA §15064.5(e) shall be implemented by Regional Parks or their designee.

VI GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Analysis

- a. Would the project expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

- i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.

LS The project is not located within a special studies zone. The nearest special studies zones occur on the Santa Rosa Quadrangle Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map, approximately 6 miles east of the project site. No structures are proposed and risks from rupture of an earthquake fault are considered to be less than significant.

- ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?

LS The project site is subject to seismic ground shaking similar to all of coastal northern California. No structures are proposed to be constructed at the off-leash dog area. As an open outside area, the risk of adverse effects from strong seismic ground shaking is considered to be less than significant.

- iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

LS As indicated above, seismic activity is a reality in coastal northern California. However, as no structures are proposed, the risk from seismic-related ground failure is less than significant.

- iv. Landslides?

NI All project alternative locations are relatively flat to gently sloped and not subject to landslides.

- b. Would the project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

LSM Soils at Ragle Park are classified as Goldridge fine sandy loams. These soils are very fine and observation at the alternative locations indicates that dust and erosion may be problematic. The Sonoma County Soil Survey describes hazard of erosion in this class of soil as moderate⁹. Larger off-leash areas would allow less concentrated use by dogs and result in less potential for erosion. Dog parks surveyed did not report dust being a problem. Several did indicate that erosion during wet weather was problematic at times and resolved the issue by closing the dog area to use until the surface recovered. Dog parks in Santa Rosa have had success using bark/wood chips and are able to leave the portions of the dog area utilizing wood chips open year-round. Erosion on sloping sites would be more problematic than on flat.

Mitigation Measure GS1 will insure that soil erosion associated with the dog park is maintained at a level that is less than significant. Further, if erosion or dust become problematic, it is recommended that the Friends of the Dog Park and/or Regional Parks utilize wood/bark chips to reduce erosion.

⁹ *Soil Survey of Sonoma County, California*. Vernon C. Miller. 1972. United States Department of Agriculture. Pgs 37-38.
Brelje & Race Civil Engineers
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- c. **Would the project be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?**

NI Soils in the area are already subject to foot-traffic and dog use and have not shown indication of failure. Construction of a fence will not alter existing soil stability in the area. Except as indicated in (b.) above, the project will not impact soil stability.

- d. **Would the project be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?**

NI Project construction consist of installation of fencing. There is no risk to life or property associated with soils at the alternative sites.

- e. **Would the project have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?**

NI No septic systems or alternative waste water disposal systems are included in this project.

Cumulative Impacts

There are no adverse cumulative environmental impacts to geology and soils resulting from implementation of the proposed project.

Mitigation Measures

- GS1 Regional Parks will ultimately be responsible for maintenance of the dog area. Should routine monitoring associated with maintenance indicate that soil erosion is becoming problematic or that excessive dust is generated due to lack of groundcover or dry soils, the dog area will be closed for use until the vegetative groundcover has recovered and erosion is no longer problematic. The dog area shall be subject to closure for recovery at the discretion of Regional Parks.

VII HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Analysis

- a. **Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?**

NI No transport, use or disposal of hazardous materials will be associated with this project. Regional Park's existing Elizabeth Perrone Dog Park utilizes scoops and bags to pick up feces that is then placed in metal trash cans. Trash can contents is disposed of with other park waste. The same scenario is expected at any of the project alternative locations.

- b. **Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?**

NI The project will not involve long-term use of hazardous materials. There is no reason to expect an upset or accident involving hazardous materials at the alternative project locations.

- c. **Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?**

NI The project will not include use or storage of hazardous materials and will not be a risk to nearby schools.

- d. **Would the project be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?**

NI No hazardous materials were indicated to exist in the CEQA review prior to adoption of the Master Plan. A review of leaking underground fuel tanks maintained by the State Water Resources Control Board¹⁰ did not reveal any existing tanks or violations within Ragle Park. Given Regional Parks ownership of the park and previous agricultural land use, there is no reason to expect hazardous materials at the alternative locations.

- e. **For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?**

NI The project is not located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public use airport.

- f. **For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?**

NI The project is not in the vicinity of a private airstrip.

¹⁰ GeoTracker. State Water Resources Control Board. <http://geotracker.swrcb.ca.gov>
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Initial Study

- g. Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

NI The project will not impact emergency response or an emergency evacuation plan.

- h. Would the project expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?

NI The project is at not at significant risk of wildlands fire. Implementation of the off-leash dog area will neither increase nor decrease the risk of wildland fire at Ragle Park.

Cumulative Impacts

There are no adverse cumulative environmental impacts to or from hazards/hazardous materials resulting from implementation of the proposed project.

Mitigation Measures

No adverse environmental impacts to or from hazards/hazardous materials have been identified; therefore, no mitigation is required.

VIII HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Analysis

- a. Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?

NI The project will not necessitate establishment of any waste discharge requirements nor will it violate any water quality standard.

- b. Would the project substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?

NI The project will have no impact on groundwater supplies nor will it interfere with groundwater recharge.

- c. Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

NI Implementation of the off-leash dog area will not alter the existing grade or drainage pattern at any of the alternative locations (with the exception of the elimination of the existing stockpile on Alternative 3). Existing grass/weed ground cover will be retained to inhibit erosion. There is no reason to expect substantial erosion or siltation as a result of this project. See (b.) in the Geology & Soils section for further discussion of erosion.

- d. Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?

NI As indicated above, implementation of the project will not alter the existing grade or drainage pattern of any of the sites except for Alternative 3 that would include removal of an existing stockpile. No new impervious surfaces will be introduced. There is no reason to expect a substantial increase in the rate or amount of surface runoff.

- e. Would the project create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?

NI The project will not alter the existing runoff at any of the project alternative sites. There are no stormwater drainage improvements in the immediate vicinity of the alternative sites and none are proposed. As indicated in (f.) below, retention of native vegetation and implementation of Best Management Practices will control polluted runoff.

- f. Would the project otherwise substantially degrade water quality?

NI Alternatives 1-4: The project will not degrade water quality as long as adequate native vegetation buffers are maintained around their perimeter.

LS Alternative 5: The Sonoma County General Plan Open Space Element defines four types of riparian corridor. The Urban Riparian Corridor is appropriate due to the existing public/quasi public land use. The required setback for Urban Riparian Corridor is 50 feet

from top of bank. However, bikeways, trails and parks are allowed uses within the 50-foot setback per Policy OS-5e(9). A 50-foot average setback from the riparian corridor to the south of this alternative is included to prevent degradation of water quality. Retention of the native vegetation (grassy swale) between the fenced off-leash dog area and the riparian corridor will serve to reduce potential sediment and nutrients entering the drainage during runoff events due to (vegetative filtering) to a less than significant level.

- g. **Would the project place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?**

NI The project does not include any housing nor is it within a 100-year flood hazard area.

- h. **Would the project place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?**

NI The project is not within a 100-year flood hazard area.

- i. **Would the project expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?**

NI There are no levees or dams in the project vicinity.

- j. **Would the project be subject to inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?**

NI The project is not subject to inundation by seiche, tsunami or mudflow.

Cumulative Impacts

There are no adverse cumulative environmental impacts to hydrology/water quality resulting from implementation of the proposed project.

Mitigation Measures

No adverse environmental impacts to hydrology/water quality resulting from implementation of the proposed project have been identified; therefore, no mitigation is required.

IX LAND USE AND PLANNING

Analysis

a. Would the project physically divide an established community?

NI The project will not divide any communities. The project is located within the developed portion of Ragle Park and would be an asset to dog owners wishing to utilize an off-leash dog facility in the community.

b. Would the project conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

The Master Plan does not include specific reference to an off-leash dog area and will need to be amended to designate the adopted alternative location as an off-leash dog area. This Initial Study discusses the environmental implications of that amendment, the construction of and the use of the dog area.

LS Alternatives 1 and 2: These locations are within the active portion of the park. Amendment of the Master Plan to include the dog area within the active portion is consistent with the past amendment that included tennis courts and playing fields, and would be less than significant from a planning perspective. However, both of these alternatives are in relatively open natural areas of the active portion of the park and are used by picnickers and people seeking open area recreation activities not associated with the playing fields. Implementation of the dog area at these two locations would be less consistent with surrounding uses (i.e., group picnic area, playground and open area recreational activities). While this impact is less than significant in light of the Master Plan, other alternative locations may be more appropriate for the off-leash dog area.

LS Alternatives 3: This location is within the active portion of the park. Amendment of the Master Plan to include the dog area within the active portion is consistent with the past amendment that included tennis courts and playing fields, and would be less than significant from a planning perspective. Alternative 3 is perhaps the most compatible location for the dog area from a land use perspective as surrounding uses are the tennis courts (already fenced) and the ball field (also partially fenced) rather than less formally developed areas of the active portion of the park.

LS Alternatives 4: This location is within the active portion of the park. Amendment of the Master Plan to include the dog area within the active portion is consistent with the past amendment that included tennis courts and playing fields, and would be less than significant from a planning perspective. While this alternative is in a less formally developed portion of the active part of the park, it is relatively isolated from other uses associated with Alternative 1 and 2. Implementation of the dog area at this location would be more consistent with surrounding uses than Alternative 1 and 2.

LS Alternatives 5: This location is within the active portion of the park. Amendment of the Master Plan to include the dog area within the active portion is consistent with the past amendment that included tennis courts and playing fields, and would be less than significant from a planning perspective. Alternative 5 is located at the southern end of the Peace Garden and is not particularly consistent with the desired tranquil setting associated with the Peace Garden. Proponents of the Peace Garden expressed a preference for Alternative 6 over Alternative 5 if one of the locations adjacent to the Peace Garden is selected. However,

given that the dog area is a recreational facility, implementation of the dog area at this location would be allowed under the Master Plan with an amendment. Alternative 5 would be the most accessible alternative due to the parking lot to its east and it is generally free of other recreational concerns associated with Alternative 1 and 2.

c. Would the project conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?

NI There are no habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans in the project area.

Cumulative Impacts

There are no adverse cumulative environmental impacts land use and planning resulting from implementation of the proposed project.

Mitigation Measures

No adverse environmental impacts to land use and planning have been identified; therefore, no mitigation is required.

X MINERAL RESOURCES

Analysis

- a. **Would the project result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?**

NI The project will not result in the loss of a known mineral resource. There are no such resources in the project area.

- b. **Would the project result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?**

NI The area is not included as a mineral resource recovery site in the County's General Plan.

Cumulative Impacts

There are no adverse cumulative environmental impacts to mineral resources resulting from implementation of the proposed project.

Mitigation Measures

No adverse environmental impacts to mineral resources have been identified; therefore, no mitigation is required.

XI NOISE

Analysis

- a. **Would the project result in exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?**

LS Implementation of an off-leash dog area at Ragle Park could result in increased noise levels in the vicinity of the dog area. However, all of the alternative locations are further away from residences than are the existing playing fields that experience considerable noise levels during practice and game events. The nearest residence to any of the alternative sites is approximately 150 feet from Site 3. The preferred Site 5 is approximately 375 feet from the nearest residence and 150 feet from the nearest formal picnicking area. Surveyed dog parks did not report noise being problematic with the exception of one incident. Based on other dog park experiences, existing noise levels at the park and distance from residences, it is unlikely that the use of the dog area would cumulatively increase noise levels already in existence at Ragle Park and should not result in exceedances of established noise levels.

- b. **Would the project result in exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?**

NI The project will not generate excessive groundborne vibration or noise.

- c. **Would the project result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?**

LS Alternatives 1-4: The project will result in increases in noise levels associated with exercising dogs in the project vicinity. However, there is already considerable ambient noise associated with use of playing fields and other activities at Ragle Park, and dog owners and numerous leashed dogs already utilize the park. Of the dog parks surveyed, only one reported complaints from a single neighbor who had moved into the neighborhood after the dog park had been in operation. Use of the dog area will be subject to the same time restrictions as the rest of the park. Any increase in ambient noise levels from dogs would be less than significant.

LSM Alternative 5: There is already considerable ambient noise associated with use of playing fields and other activities at Ragle Park, and dog owners and numerous leashed dogs already utilize the park. Site 5 is approximately 375 feet from the nearest residence and 150 feet from the nearest formal picnicking area. Implementation of the dog area adjacent to the Peace Garden could have significant noise impacts during ceremonial uses. The Peace Garden and the neighboring gazebo can be reserved for parties and ceremonies. At such times, use of the dog park could result in the creation of objectionable noise. Mitigation Measure N1 is included to reduce such noise impact to a level of less than significant.

- d. **Would the project result in a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?**

LS As indicated in (c.) above, any increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity would be less than significant.

- e. **For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?**

NI The project is not located within two miles of a public use airport.

- f. For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

NI The project is not in the vicinity of a private airstrip.

Cumulative Impacts

There are no adverse cumulative environmental impacts to noise resulting from implementation of the proposed project.

Mitigation Measures

- N1 Reservations for the Peace Garden for large group use made at least two weeks in advance would include closure of the off-leash dog area for the duration of the reservation. Regional Parks staff would post notice of the pending closure at the kiosk at the entrance to Ragle Park and at the off-leash dog area when reservation for the Peace Garden or gazebo is made. The gate to the off-leash dog area will be closed and locked prior to commencement of the reservation period.

XII POPULATION AND HOUSING

Analysis

- a. **Would the project induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?**

NI The project would be an additional recreational element of Ragle Park and is not growth inducing.

- b. **Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?**

NI The project will not displace any housing.

- c. **Would the project displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?**

NI The project will not displace any people.

Cumulative Impacts

There are no adverse cumulative environmental impacts to population and housing resulting from implementation of the proposed project.

Mitigation Measures

No adverse environmental impacts to population and housing have been identified; therefore, no mitigation is required.

XIII PUBLIC SERVICES

Analysis

- a. Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

i. **Fire protection?**

NI The project will have no impact to fire protection.

ii. **Police protection?**

LS Ragle Park is patrolled by Regional Park rangers. Based on experiences reported by operators of the 12 dog parks surveyed, users of the park are generally self-policing and adhere to posted rules. Those surveyed did not indicate an increase in off-leash dog use to or from the dog area over that existing prior to creation of the dog area. However, occasional issues with off-leash dogs outside the dog area do occur. No dog bites involving people were reported but several aggressive dogs have been banned by user groups and/or staff at other dog parks. With the reported self-policing nature of dog parks, the increase in monitoring expected to be required by park rangers is considered to be less than significant.

The project will have no impact to police protection. There is no reason to believe that implementation of the off-leash dog park would increase the need for police services in Ragle Park.

iii. **Schools?**

NI The project is not growth inducing and will have no impact to schools.

iv. **Parks?**

NI This Initial Study addresses impacts to Ragle Park. The proposed project would add an additional facility to an existing park, requiring an amendment to the Master Plan.

v. **Other public facilities?**

NI Implementation of the off-leash dog area will not impact other public facilities.

Cumulative Impacts

There are no adverse cumulative environmental impacts to public services resulting from implementation of the proposed project.

Mitigation Measures

No adverse environmental impacts to public services have been identified; therefore, no mitigation is required.

XIV RECREATION

Analysis

- a. Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

LS Alternatives 1-5: The project includes the addition of an off-leash dog area in an existing regional park. Ragle Park is subject to intensive use of its recreational fields, picnic facilities and trails. Dogs are currently allowed in the park on-leash. Implementation of the project will result in concentration of dogs in the dog area but on-leash activities are expected to continue in other parts of the park. Concentration of dog activity could result in erosion of soils. The project gives Regional Parks the authority to close the dog area for recovery should such erosion occur. Given that authority, physical deterioration of the area encompassed by the dog park will be controlled and will be less than significant.

NI No Project Alternative: Under the No Project Alternative, off-leash dog activity at Ragle Park would continue to be prohibited. Dog owners wishing to recreate with their dogs in an off-leash fashion would still need to go to other dog parks to do so.

- b. Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

LS Alternative 1-5: Ragle Park already exists. The proposal includes implementation of an off-leash dog area within the existing developed portion of the park. The Master Plan would be amended to include the dog area, but no expansion into the undeveloped portion of the park would occur. Implementation of the dog park would utilize between 0.2 to one acre of the approximately 40-acre developed portion of the park. At a maximum, the one acre figure allocates 2.5 percent of the park to dog use. As the Master Plan designates the developed portion of the park for recreational facilities, this limited use conversion is considered to be less than significant.

Cumulative Impacts

There are no adverse cumulative environmental impacts to recreation resulting from implementation of the proposed project.

Mitigation Measures

No adverse environmental impacts to recreation have been identified; therefore, no mitigation is required.

XV TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

Analysis

- a. **Would the project cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?**

LS There is a possibility that the implementation of the off-leash dog park would increase usage of the Ragle Park's facilities by dog owners that do not currently recreate with their dogs at Ragle Park. However, given the high level of use by dog owners that already occurs at Ragle Park, and the opportunities for use of off-leash dog parks at other locations throughout Sonoma County, it is considered unlikely that the increase in traffic would be significant. Any increase in traffic in relation to existing traffic entering and exiting Ragle Park would be less than significant.

- b. **Would the project exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?**

NI The project will not cause any level of service to be exceeded.

- c. **Would the project result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?**

NI The project will not have any impact to air traffic patterns.

- d. **Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?**

NI The project will not increase any transportation or traffic related hazards.

- e. **Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?**

NI The project will have no impact to emergency access.

- f. **Would the project result in inadequate parking capacity?**

LS As indicated above, there may be a slight increase of traffic to Ragle Park by dog owners wishing to recreate with their dogs in an off-leash facility. However, such increase will have a less than significant impact to existing parking capacity. Concerns regarding park users parking in residential areas will remain valid. However, any increase to such parking on public streets resulting from use of the dog park is expected to be less than significant.

Based on the reported self-policing of other dog parks, issues with dog owners not picking up feces along streets while taking the dog to or from the dog area should be minimal. If problems do occur, dog park users will need to step-up efforts to control this.

- g. **Would the project conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?**

NI The project will have no impact to alternative transportation.

Cumulative Impacts

There are no adverse cumulative environmental impacts to transportation/traffic resulting from implementation of the proposed project.

Mitigation Measures

No adverse environmental impacts to transportation/traffic have been identified; therefore, no mitigation is required.

XVI UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Analysis

- a. **Would the project exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?**

NI The project will not impact wastewater treatment requirements.

- b. **Would the project require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?**

NI The project will have no measurable impact to water or wastewater treatment facilities.

- c. **Would the project require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?**

NI No storm water drainage facilities are planned for the off-leash dog area. Existing grades and ground cover will be retained. No new impervious surfaces would be introduced.

- d. **Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?**

NI The project will not alter current water demand and supply in the project area. Ragle Park is located in a Class 2 Water Area. As such, there is no reason to expect that existing water supplies are inadequate to serve the new dog area.

- e. **Would the project result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?**

NI The project will not impact wastewater treatment.

- f. **Would the project be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?**

NI The project will have no impact to landfill capacity.

Cumulative Impacts

There are no adverse cumulative environmental impacts to utilities and service systems resulting from implementation of the proposed project.

Mitigation Measures

No adverse environmental impacts to utilities and service systems have been identified; therefore, no mitigation is required.

XVII SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The following table summarizes the potential environmental impacts identified in this Initial Study. Both impacts that can be mitigated and impacts that are potentially significant have been bolded to allow easy assessment of which alternatives are associated with impacts that could be significant.

<u>Effect</u>	Alternative					
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
Visual impacts to surroundings	LS	LS	LS	LS	LSM	PS
Potential dust creation	LS	LS	LS	LS	LS	LS
Potential odor creation	LS	LS	LS	LS	LS	LS
Potential impacts to creeks	LS	LS	NI	LS	LS	PS
Potential to reduce gopher population/impact raptors	LS	LS	LS	LS	LS	LS
Potential discovery of cultural resource	LSM	LSM	LSM	LSM	LSM	LSM
Potential seismic events	LS	LS	LS	LS	LS	LS
Potential erosion/loss of topsoil	LSM	LSM	LSM	LSM	LSM	LSM
Potential to impact water quality	NI	NI	NI	NI	LS	LSM
Conflict with Ragle Master Plan	LS	LS	LS	LS	LS	PS
Noise impacts	LS	LS	LS	LS	LSM	LSM
Increase need for park rangers to enforce rules	LS	LS	LS	LS	LS	LS
Impacts to recreational facilities	LS	LS	LS	LS	LS	PS
Increase in traffic to Ragle Park	LS	LS	LS	LS	LS	LS
Increase parking in surrounding neighborhoods	LS	LS	LS	LS	LS	LS

The above summary shows that, with the exception of Alternative 6, Alternatives 1 through 5 are all acceptable from an environmental standpoint since all potential impacts identified can be reduced to a level of less than significant upon implementation of specified mitigation measures.

XVIII MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

- a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory? **No.**
- b. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)? **No.**
- c. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? **No.**

DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- ☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- ☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- ☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

For:
Sonoma County Regional Parks

DOCUMENT PREPARATION AND SOURCES

Ambient Air Quality Standards & Bay Area Attainment Status. Updated 1/03. BAAQMD.
<http://www.baaqmd.gov/pln/ambientairquality.asp>.

Bay Area Air Pollution Summary—2002. BAAQMD.
<http://www.baaqmd.gov/pio/aqsummaries/pollsum02.pdf>

California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines. 2000.

GeoTracker. State Water Resources Control Board. <http://geotracker.swrcb.ca.gov>

Lynn Eisenman. May 4, 1978. *A Cultural Resource Study of Ragle Ranch Park, Sonoma County, California.* The Anthropology Laboratory, Sonoma State College.

Master Plan Ragle Ranch Park, County of Sonoma. May 1982. Sonoma County Regional Parks. Includes Management Plan and Initial Study prepared by The Planning Collaborative. May 1982.

Paleontological Collecting. 1987. National Academy Press. Washington, DC.

Soil Survey of Sonoma County, California. Vernon C. Miller. 1972. United States Department of Agriculture. Pgs 37-38.

Sonoma County General Plan. 1994. County of Sonoma.

Sonoma County Important Farmland—1996. California Resources Agency. Department of Conservation.

Prepared by:

Sue Nelson—Principal Planner, Brelje & Race

Justin Witt—Project Planner, Brelje & Race

Consultation with:

Michelle Julene—Sonoma County Regional Parks

Philip Sales—Sonoma County Regional Parks

Mark Cleveland—Sonoma County Regional Parks

Becky Duckles—Arborist

Alan Buckmann—California Department of Fish & Game

Public Agencies Contacted by NOP:

California Department of Fish & Game

Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region

Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District

Sonoma County Conservation Council

Sonoma County Park & Recreation Advisory

Sonoma County Permit & Resource Management Department

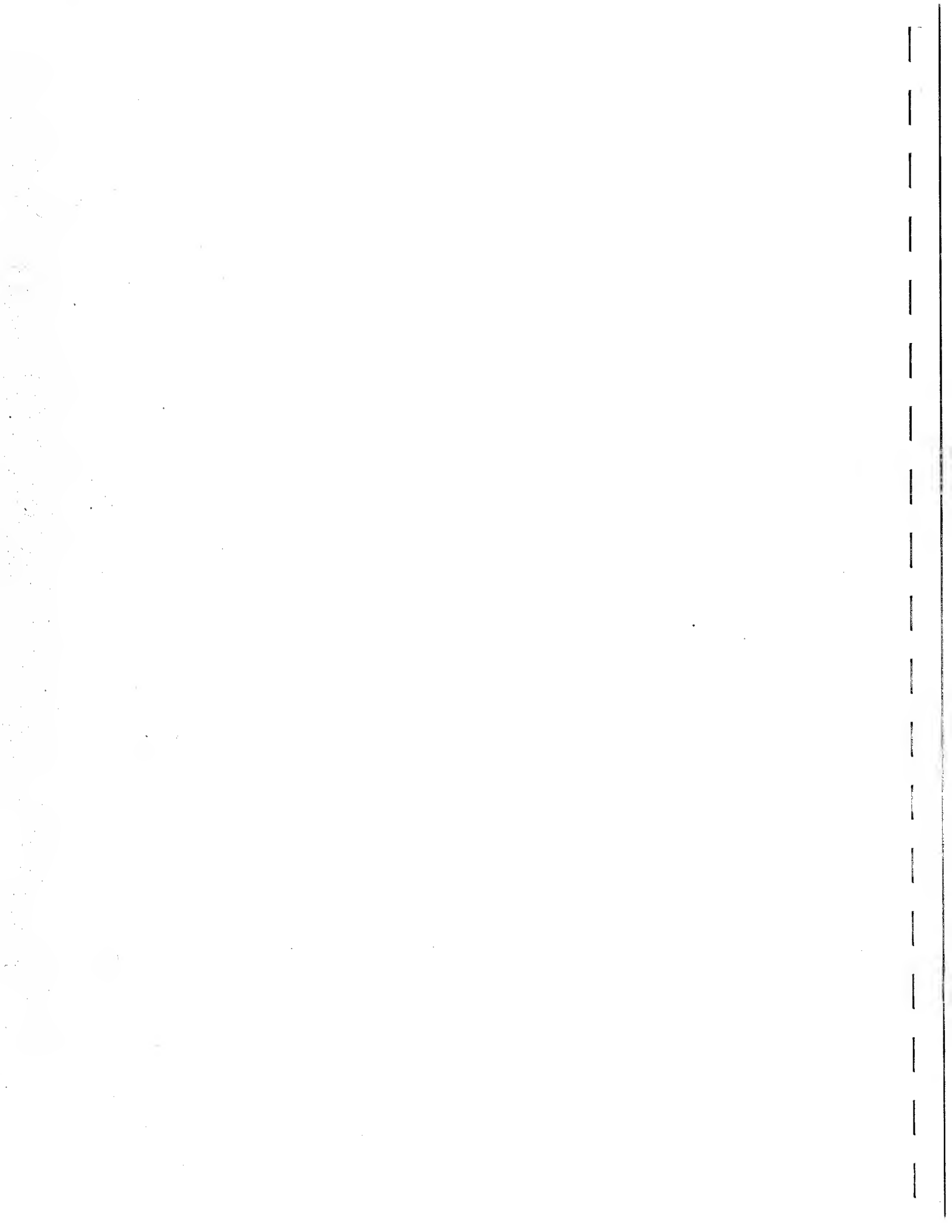
Sonoma County Public Health Department

State Clearinghouse

US Army Corps of Engineers

US Department of Fish & Wildlife

APPENDIX A:
SURVEY RESULTS



**Summary of Survey Results for 12 Sonoma/Marin County Dog Parks
Ragle Ranch Off-leash Dog Area**

	Canine Common, Larkspur	DeTurf Park, Santa Rosa	Doyle Community Park, Santa Rosa	Galvin Community Park, Santa Rosa	McInnis Park, San Rafael	Northwest Community Park, Santa Rosa	O'Hair Park, Novato	Putnam Park, Cotati	Remington Park, Sausalito	Rincon Valley Community Park, Santa Rosa	Rocky Memorial Dog Park, Petaluma	Villa Dog Park, Healdsburg
Setting	Rural Urban	X X	X X	X X	X X	X X	X X	X X	X X	X X	X X	X X
Size	(ac.)	0.3	1	<1 ^a			2.5	0.25	1	<1 ^a	9	1
Time Open	(yrs.)	13	15	10			1.5	3	12		5	0
Maintained by	Staff Volunteer Both	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X X	X X X
Fenced?		Yes X	Yes X	Yes X	Yes X	Yes X	Yes X	Yes X	Yes X	Yes X	Part X	Yes X
Landscape Material	Turf Bark Chip Native Dirt	X X X X	X X X X	X X X X	X X X X	X X X X	X X X X	X X X X	X X X X	X X X X	X X X X	X X X X
Close for Recovery		No	Part	Part	Part	Yes	Part	No	No	Part	No	
Erosion Problems			No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes ¹	No	No	
Dust Problems		No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes ¹	No	No	
Noise Problems		No	No	No	No	No	No	No	One	No	No	
Odor Problems		No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes ²	No	No	
Safety Problems		No	No	No	No	Minor ³	No	No	Minor ³	No	Minor ³	

a. Size based on visual observation and is approximate.

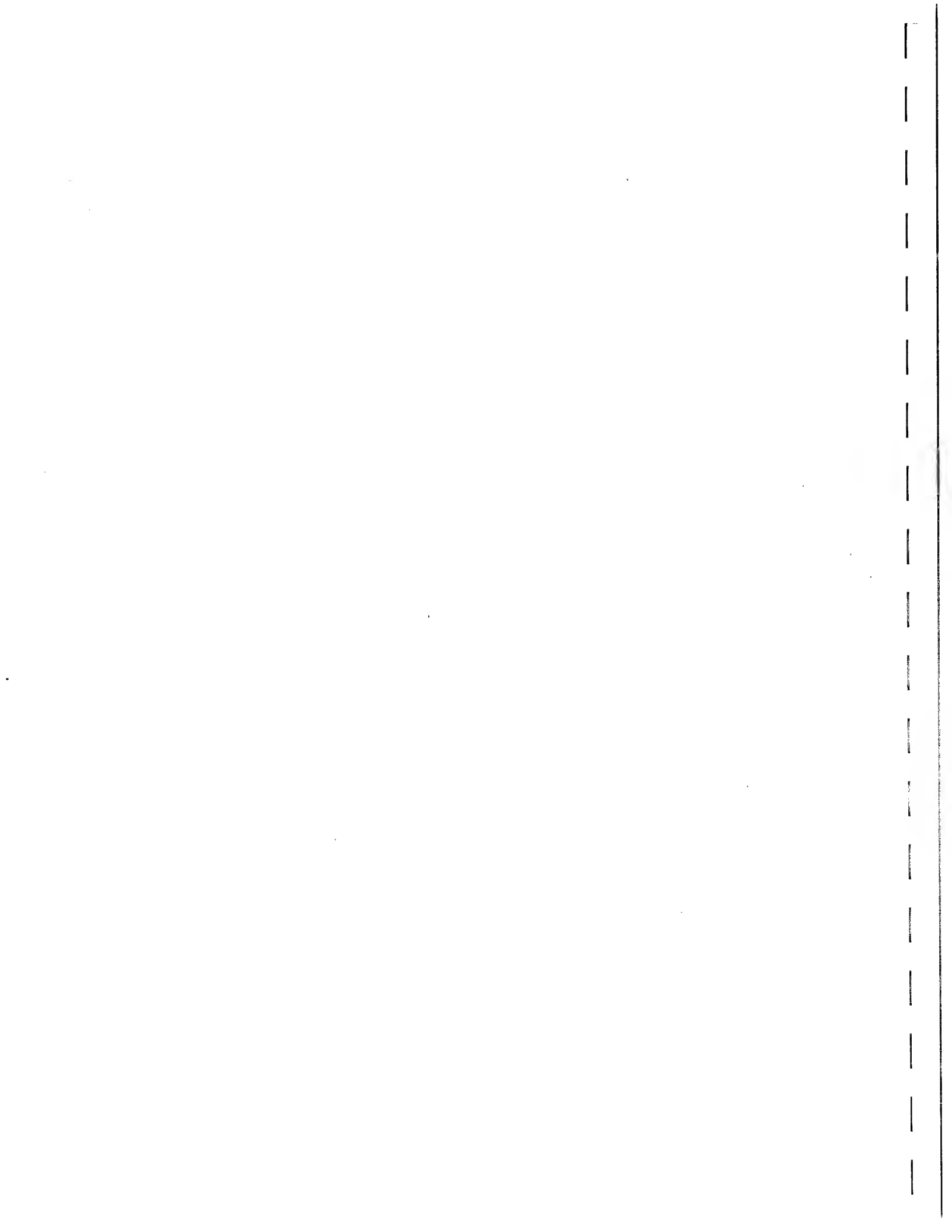
b. Erosion and dust primarily due to sloping site. Bark chips used as ground cover but chips migrate downhill and need to be periodically replaced.

c. Odor problems have been reported due to insufficient pick-up of receptacles.

d. Minor safety problems reported are limited to dog interactions. No biting issues were reported.



APPENDIX B:
NOP COMMENTS



RAGLE RANCH REGIONAL PARK – Proposed Off-Leash Dog Area

List of NOP Commentators

The letter(s) shown in bold following each agency or commenter's name denotes the particular index category(s) assigned to the agency or individual commenter. Refer to the "Index for Comments Raised During the Notice of Preparation Period for the Ragle Ranch Off-Leash Dog Park"

Agencies – Letters (7)

State Clearinghouse **A**

US Fish & Wildlife Service **D, E**

Cal Trans **A**

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board **C, J, K, L**

California Department of Fish & Game (old for transcription) **D, P**

Sonoma County Permit & Resource Management, Health **G, K, M, N**

Madrone Audobon Society **D, E, I, O, P**

Individuals – Letters (28)	
Yolanda Wood G, H, I, K	Carol Mitchel D, E, F, G, I, K
Lyn Gannon B	Judith Rosseau D, E, I
Trudie Collins D, E, F, H, I	Jim Castle I, U, V, W
Kathleen Madgett D, F, G, I, K, L	Bonnie Story (Letter to Editor of Sonoma Index Tribune) D, H, J
Dale Roberts F, Q, R, S	Arlene Kallen D, E, F, G, H, I, J, L, T, W
Michele Hanson B	Elizabeth Carothers Herron F, W
Ann Conger and Kris Palo D, E, F, L	Molly Matheson D, E, F, H, I, K, P
Henry Violin E, F, I, L	Michele Linfante and Robert Roberts F, I,
Chris Stover and Lorraine Bazan C, D, E, F, G, I, J, L	Marisa Vossen E, F, G, H
Rhonda Mikolaitas F, G, I, K	Phyllis DeJoseph F, I, K
Jo Bentz D, E, F, G, I, J, K, L, O, P, T, U	Louise Eisen F, H, I, U
Clark Mitchel H	Carol Vellutine D, E, G, I, L, T
Friends of the Dog Park I, T, U, V, W	Vera Burdick D, E, F, H, I
Jill Breiter	Arthur W. Casulli D, E, F, H, I, K, Q
Mark Neely	Lisa Hug D, E, I,
Kathy Austin	
Wendy A. Born	
Shannon Stevens	
Matt Stevens	
Individuals – Comment Cards (39)	
Lynn Stewart B	Monica Harris X
Kathy Wilder B	A.J. Wood C, D, E
Lena Sell B	Marsh Sue Lustig E, I
Terry Garner L	Jody Tucker X
Gail Atkins & Bob Mugar B	Karen Hollister W
Kim Sturn B	Linda Roa F
Yolanda Wood C	Karla Fittipaldi T
Laurie Horn D, H, I	Diana Cesanetti D
Andree MacColl H	Loretta J. Morton F, G
Lauralee Aho D, H, K	Jewell Robbins F
Phyllis Werlin F, I	May Cantwell E, I, K
Mary Killian D, E	Nikos Najarian D, G
Janis G. Taylor E, F, G, K	Andrea Austin B
John and Mary Ann Gomme B	Bradford L. Kallen F, I
Tamara Morgan D, E, F, G, I	Madeleine A. Shore F
Phil Van Soelen E, I	Jahna Muncritz F

Karen Huguley D, F, G, I	Patti Miller E, F, G
John and Rosemarie Spillane G	Murtle Gregori K
Dagmar Heimann D, I	Fred Bollinger D, E, L
Priscilla Griffith X	

Individuals – E-mail (16)

Susan Snow A
Arlene Kallen A
Jerry Meshulam D, E, F, L, P
Ann Conger and Kris Palo D, E, F, I, L
A. J. Levis D, E, G, H, I, K, W
Anne Belden B
Fran Murphy B
Sandi Brown B

Jenefer Merrill W
Lynn Werner B
Gina Fregosi G, W
Zeno Switjtink D, E, F, I, J, L, P, T
Arlene Kallen (See Individual Letter)
Wendy Krupnick E, I, L, P
Monique Rubin D, E
Helen Libeu H, K

Verbal Comments – Scoping Session on September 25, 2003 (45)

The names of the individual commenter who participated in the Scoping Session are not listed, however, detailed descriptions of the comments and questions are provided in the Scoping Session Notes.

A, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, K, L, P, T, U, V, W

**Index for Comments Raised During the
Notice of Preparation Period for the
Ragle Ranch Off-Leash Dog Park**

The number in parenthesis following each comment represents the frequency with which this comment was made in writing and verbally (at the Scoping Session) during the Notice of Preparation Period.

- A Comment of a general nature, no environmental issues raised. (6)
- B Statement of personal opinion either supporting or opposing the dog park (13)
- C Statement of concern related to riparian resources (5)
- D Statement of concern regarding impacts to wildlife (44)
- E Statement of concern related to oak woodland, wildflowers, or other plant life (37)
- F Statement of concern regarding aesthetics, tranquility (38)
- G Statement of concern regarding noise impacts (21)
- H Statement of concern regarding safety issues involving dogs running loose, biting, failure to obey rules, liability issues, etc. (18)
- I Statements of concern regarding the proposed project's consistency with the Ragle Ranch Master Plan and other land use compatibility issues within the park; concern regarding the loss of useable parkland; potential conflict with the Apple Blossom Fair (44)
- J Statement of concern regarding water quality issues (6)
- K Statement of concern regarding odors and other impacts associated with dog feces and urine (19)
- L Statement of concern regarding soil erosion, dust, and sedimentation (16)
- M Statement of concern regarding potential mosquito propagation (1)
- N Statement of concern regarding the presence of poison oak (1)
- O Statement of concern regarding sloping conditions on various sites (2)
- P Suggested use of a turf surface (including irrigation) (12)
- Q Statement of concern regarding traffic and parking conditions within the park; concern regarding enforcement of traffic regulations on public streets surrounding the park (2)
- R Statement of concern regarding public services (1)
- S Statement of concern regarding animal waste in the neighborhoods that adjoin the park (1)
- T Suggestion of alternative dog park sites both inside Ragle Ranch Park and at locations elsewhere outside the park (8)
- U Statement of concern related to potential archaeological site(s) (6)

- V Statement of concern related to impacts resulting from the lack of off-leash dog park areas (3)
- W Statement of concern regarding the adequacy of the sizes of the various alternative dog park sites (12)
- X Statement of support for one or more alternative sites; no environmental issues raised (3)

SCOPING SESSION NOTES

Ragle Ranch Off-Leash Dog Park CEQA Process

September 25, 2003

The letter(s) shown in bold following each comment/question denotes the particular index category assigned to the individual comment/question. Refer to the "Index for Comments Raised During the Notice of Preparation Period for the Ragle Ranch Off-Leash Dog Park"

General Comments/Questions

Questions were asked regarding whether the proposed dog park enclosures area would be turfed, irrigated, and/or mowed. **P**

Question: Does County Regional Parks operate any other existing dog parks? **A**

Comment: There is an archaeological site in the northern region of Ragle Park. **U**

Question: Will the "no project" alternative be considered in the Initial Study? **A**

Questions: Will the existing Ragle Ranch Master Plan be considered in the Initial Study? (A response was given by Philip Sales indicating that a Master Plan amendment will be required for a dog park at any location within Ragle Park.) **I**

Comment: People are going to allow their dogs to run off leash, so it's better to provide a location for them to do so legitimately. If a place is provided, people will use it. If no place is provided, the practice of allowing dogs to run off-leash in the "back area" of Ragle Park will continue. **V**

Comment: The larger the site provided for the dog park, the less intense the physical impacts will be. If dogs are crowded into a small area, problems associated with dust, soil erosion, loss of vegetative cover, etc., will be more acute than if the dogs have a larger area in which to play. **W**

Comment: Dogs and wildlife are not compatible. **D**

Comment: Dogs are already present in the park, both within the developed park area and the undeveloped "back area". There's been no effect on wildlife due to the dogs that are already present in the park. **D**

Comment: A special off-leash dog park should not be created. Our parklands are already being "nibbled away" by special interests such as the proposed dog park. **I**

Comment: In response to comments that dogs and wildlife are not compatible, it was noted that there are already lots of uses in Ragle Park that are not compatible with wildlife, such as the soccer fields, the play equipment area, etc. **D, I**

Suggestion: One alternative that should be considered would be to section off an existing turfed area for the dog park. The presence of turf would minimize dust and reduce potential impacts to wildlife. **D, L, P**

Question: Has there been any effort to locate a dog park somewhere else other than Ragle Park? (In response, Philip Sales stated that the County has not pursued such a search since (a) the proposed project was instigated by members of the community who brought a specific request to the County for a dog park at this location, and (b) because County Parks does not have other lands in this area of the County.) The person who asked the original question then asked if the dog park proponents could provide documentation of their efforts to find other locations for a dog park. **T**

Comment: There is a small soccer field that is hardly ever used for organized sports. This site should be considered for use as a dog park. **T**

Question: Are there existing turfed areas that could have dual use, for instance, allowing an off-leash dog park during certain hours on an existing soccer field. (Philip Sales responded that conflicts between such dual uses have been found elsewhere when such a practice has been tried.) **P**

Comment: A representative of the Audubon Society stated her organization's goal of habitat preservation. **D, E**

Observation: Dog parks elsewhere, like the one near Maria Carrillo High School, are well-policed by the people who use them. Rules are observed. **H**

Site Specific Comments/Questions

Site 1

Comment: There are many wildflowers on this site, as well as wildlife including quail, rabbits, etc. This site should not be considered because of its habitat value. **D, E**

Comment: The Apple Blossom event uses this site for parking. **I**

Comment: Because this site is so large, it would be a good place for the dog park since impacts would be less intense than on a smaller site. **W**

Comment: A lot of people use this site, especially in the winter when other areas of the park are flooded. Disabled people use this area since it is accessible to them. By fencing the site for a dog park, the area will be available for the exclusive use of dog owners only. **I**

Comment: While the natural resource qualities of this site have been somewhat degraded, it is a good candidate site for oak woodland restoration. No new oaks are growing here, and unless restoration occurs, the oaks that are here will eventually die off. This site offers an opportunity for education regarding oak savannah woodlands. **E**

Comment: The visual impact of a chain link fence would mean the permanent degradation of the visual character of this area. **F**

Comment: Birds of prey hunt in this area. **D**

Site 2

Comment: The proximity of this site to the picnic area is problematic. People don't put their dogs back on their leashes right away, and it is expected that dogs will be running loose in the picnic area. **H**

Comment: Because of its proximity to the picnic area, this open area is often utilized for games or other group activities as an expanded use of the picnic area. **I**

Comment: A chain link fence in this area would be highly visible and disturbing. **F**

Comment: Because this site abuts a riparian corridor, potential impacts to wildlife must be considered. **C, D**

Site 3

Question: Could this site be turfed? P

Comment: A .25 acre site is too small. The site will be dusty and will turn into a mud-hole in the winter. W

Comment: This is a particularly good site because it's located in an area that is already subject to heavy use. I

Comment: The soil at this site is very fragile. Dust will be a problem. (This comment was expanded by the observation of another participant that fragile soil conditions exist throughout Ragle Park.) L

Site 4

Comment/Question: The oak savannah present in this area allows for quiet observation of the forest and wildlife; how will a dog park impact this? E

Site 5

Comment: This is a good alternative because it's close to parking and it won't interfere with other uses in the park. It won't impact any trees. It won't affect the looped pathway. I, E

Question: Could this site be turfed? P

Comment: Birds of prey hunt in this area. D

Comment: Wildlife in the area is dwindling in the general area. Wildlife will be further impacted due to sensitivities to dog-related noises and odors. D, G, K

Comment: The proximity of this site to the Peace Garden would be a problem. The dog park and the Peace Garden would be incompatible. Input from the organization associated with the Peace Garden needs to occur. I

Comment: There are California poppies present on this site that should not be destroyed. E

Comment: If this site is selected, there will need to be a buffer area between the dog park and the Peace Garden, as well as between the dog park and the riparian corridor to the south. I

Comment: The proponents of the dog park have a very limited budget. If there is an archaeological site present at this particular site, the budget available for this project may not be adequate to cover further study of archaeological resources. U

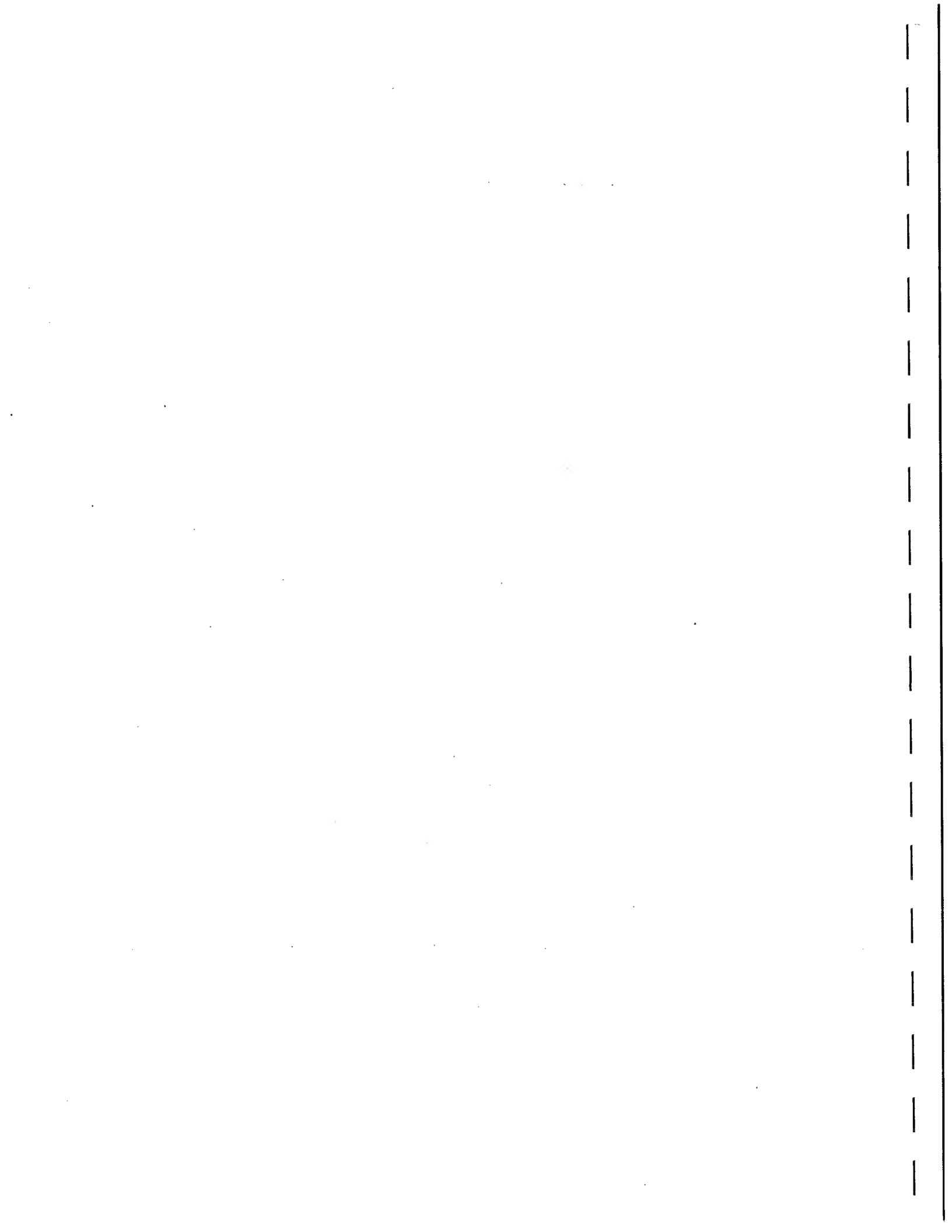
Site 6

Comment: This site should never have even been considered and should never be selected. The grassland present on this site is very valuable to wildlife. The wildlife, including rabbits, weasels, pheasants and the birds of prey that hunt here are too sensitive and should not be displaced for a dog park. D

Comments: This site has a number of positive aspects, in that it is close to parking and further away from the Peace Garden than Site 5 I

Comment: One of the good aspects of this site is its limited visibility. People who don't want to see the dog park would not have to see it. Any fencing at this location would have limited visibility. F

Comment: The limited visibility of this site could be a problem with respect to the personal safety of those using the dog park. H





NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN INITIAL STUDY

SONOMA COUNTY REGIONAL PARKS
PHONE: (707) 565-2041

2300 COUNTY CENTER DRIVE, SUITE 120a

SANTA ROSA, CA 95403
FAX: (707) 565-3642

September 8, 2003

The Sonoma County Regional Parks Department (Regional Parks) is preparing an Initial Study for the proposed:

Ragle Ranch Regional Park Off-leash Dog Area

Introduction

Regional Parks is requesting comments from responsible and trustee agencies, property owners in the project vicinity, and other interested parties regarding the scope and content of the Initial Study. Responsible and trustee agencies are requested to provide comments regarding the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to that agency's statutory responsibilities in relation to the proposed project. Regional Parks is also interested in comments from property owners and other interested parties regarding what should be included in the Initial Study.

Regional Parks staff will prepare the Initial Study in accordance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines. An Initial Study is a preliminary analysis of a proposed project's potentially significant environmental effects regarding construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed project. After the Initial Study is prepared, Regional Parks will present the document to the Sonoma County Environmental Review Committee (ERC), who will determine whether a Negative Declaration or an Environmental Impact Report should be prepared. Regional Parks will invite those on the project mailing list to attend the ERC meeting.

Notice of Preparation Comment Period

Please send written comments to Michelle Julene, Environmental Specialist, in care of the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department, at the address listed above.

The comment period for the Notice of Preparation will close at 5:00 p.m. on **October 10, 2003**, which is 33 days after mailing of this document. Please note that while the comment period for the Notice of Preparation has a closing date, interested parties are encouraged to contact Regional Parks staff at any time during the process to receive an update of the process, to ask questions, and share information.

Public Scoping Meeting

Regional Parks will host a Public Scoping Meeting regarding the proposed project. The Public Scoping Meeting is not a required part of the CEQA process. Regional Parks staff will present the conceptual plan for the Ragle Park Off-leash Dog Area, and will discuss the respective planning and environmental processes. Then, we will walk through Ragle Park to view six alternative sites. Regional Parks would like to hear from the community as well as the responsible and trustee agencies regarding support for the proposed project and regarding concerns. The Public Scoping Meeting is scheduled as follows:

**September 25, 2003, 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Ragle Ranch Regional Park, Group Picnic Area
500 Ragle Road, Sebastopol**

Regional Parks Contact Person

Please call Michelle Julene at (707) 565-3962 if you have questions regarding this Notice of Preparation. Documents relating to the proposed project are available for review at the Sonoma County Regional Parks office. Please call the main office at (707) 565-2041 to set up an appointment to review the documents.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Purpose

The Friends of the Dog Park have requested development of an off-leash dog area at Ragle Ranch Regional Park (Ragle Park). The off-leash dog area would allow dog owners to recreate with their dogs within Ragle Park without leash constraints and provide a social setting for off-leash dog interactions.

Project Background

The Sonoma County Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (Commission) received a proposal from the Friends of the Dog Park for an off-leash dog area at Ragle Park on April 30, 2002, requesting the Commission to make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to approve the proposal.

On May 21, 2002, the Commission directed the Friends of the Dog Park to conduct a neighborhood survey to ensure that all neighbors were informed of the Proposal. Results of that survey were presented to the Commission on June 25, 2002 and the Commission adopted Resolution Number 02-06-05 supporting the concept of the Proposal and recommending that the Board of Supervisors approve the Proposal. On October 1, 2002, the Board of Supervisors directed Regional Parks to prepare, or have prepared, an Initial Study pursuant to CEQA.

Project Location

Please refer to Figure 1 – Project Location Map.

The project is located in Ragle Park on Ragle Road in Sebastopol, Sonoma County, California. Ragle Park is north of Sebastopol on the west side of Ragle Road.

Existing Site Conditions

Ragle Park is a 155-acre park consisting of an approximately 40-acre developed area to the east and a network of trails in the 115-acre undeveloped west section. Developed recreational facilities include tennis courts, softball diamonds, volleyball courts, soccer fields, picnic areas, a playground and a peace garden.

Project Description

The proposed Ragle Ranch Off-leash dog area includes the recreational features described herein. Six alternative locations are proposed for the off-leash dog area as shown of Figure 2. All locations would be fenced with 4-foot high cyclone fencing with a double gated entry to prevent dogs from exiting the area uncontrolled. Fencing would be placed outside of the dripline of existing trees to avoid potential impacts to trees. Water service would be extended to the site for owners and dogs. Facilities would be provided for the collection and disposal of dog waste. A sign would be posted at the entrance stating rules of use and owner responsibilities. Regional Parks would mow the site approximately twice per year for fire abatement.

- Alternative 1 is centrally located at the northerly sloping clearing in the oak woodland area of Ragle Park. Alternative 1 is approximately 1.0 acre in size and slopes from east to west. This location is used one weekend per year for Gravenstein Apple Fair staff parking and would be closed to dog area users during that time. Access to Alternative 1 would require extension of a pathway for approximately 70 feet.
- Alternative 2 is located in the second clearing in the oak woodland area and is approximately 0.6 acre in size. This location is relatively more flat than Alternative 1. It is located approximately 50 feet north of the group picnic ground. Alternative 2 is also used by Gravenstein Apple Fair staff for parking and would be similarly closed during that time. Access to Alternative 2 would require extension of a pathway for approximately 100 feet.

- Alternative 3 is located between the tennis courts and softball diamond. It is approximately 0.1 acre in size and would be graded to relatively flat. The existing pathway that cuts through the site would be removed. There is ample access to Alternative 3.
- Alternative 4 is at the northwest end of the oak woodland within the developed portion of the park. It is approximately 0.3 acre in size and slopes gently to the west. Alternative 4 is easily accessed from an existing pathway.
- Alternative 5 is located at the southwesterly end of the developed portion of the park, east of the peace garden. The approximately 0.4 acre site is generally flat with no existing trees. Access to Alternative 5 would be via the existing parking lot on its east side.
- Alternative 6 is located west of the Peace Garden. It is an approximately 0.8 acre portion of the grassland that slopes to the west. Access to Alternative 6 would be via the existing parking lot to the east. Alternative 6 is outside of the developed portion of Ragle Park.

Development of Ragle Ranch is guided by the Ragle Ranch Park Master Plan, adopted in May 1982 and amended in 1993 to include addition of 55 paved parking spaces, four unlit tennis courts and an additional baseball/soccer field. Consistency of the off-leash dog area at the proposed alternative locations with the Master Plan will be considered in the CEQA document.

Development Schedule and Funding

The proposed project is scheduled for development following the CEQA process and project approval. Development may occur in 2004. Funding for development of the project would be provided by the "Friends of the Ragle Dog Park" through fund-raising and private donations.

Areas of Potential Environmental Effect

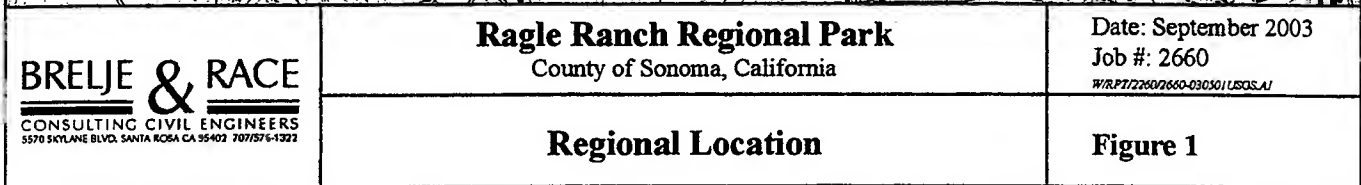
The Initial Study will analyze the potential environmental impacts associated with construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed project. Specific areas of analysis will include: aesthetics, agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards, hydrology and water quality, land use, energy and mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation and traffic, and utilities and service systems. These are the resource categories included in the Initial Study Checklist, Appendix G to the State CEQA Guidelines.

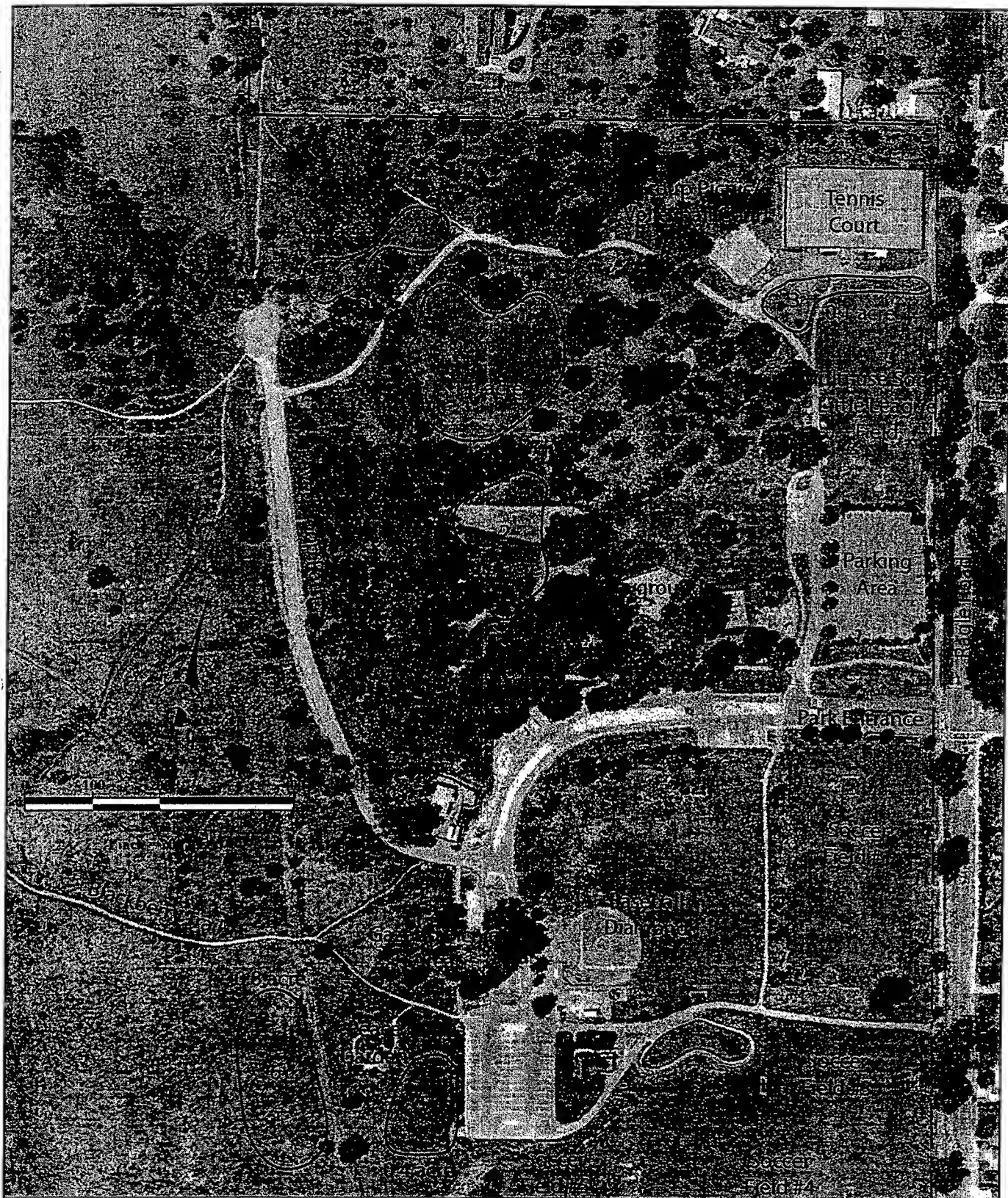
Jurisdictional, Permitting, and Regulatory Agencies

The following agencies may have regulatory jurisdiction within the proposed project:

- ❖ United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- ❖ California Department of Fish and Game
- ❖ California Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region
- ❖ Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department

MAILED TO OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND PLANNING: September 8, 2003
POSTED AT COUNTY CLERK AND MAILING DATE: September 8, 2003





BRELJE & RACE
CONSULTING CIVIL ENGINEERS
5570 SKYLINE BLVD. SANTA ROSA CA 95402 707/576-1322

Ragle Ranch Regional Park
County of Sonoma, California

Date: September 2003
Job #: 2660
W/RPT/2260/2660-030301/NOPAI

Alternative Off-leash Dog Area Locations

Figure 2



Gray Davis
Governor

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Governor's Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse



Tal Finney
Interim Director

Notice of Preparation

September 10, 2003

To: Reviewing Agencies

Re: Ragle Ranch Regional Park Off Leash Dog Area
SCH# 2003092022

Attached for your review and comment is the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Ragle Ranch Regional Park Off Leash Dog Area draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Responsible agencies must transmit their comments on the scope and content of the NOP, focusing on specific information related to their own statutory responsibility, within 30 days of receipt of the NOP from the Lead Agency. This is a courtesy notice provided by the State Clearinghouse with a reminder for you to comment in a timely manner. We encourage other agencies to also respond to this notice and express their concerns early in the environmental review process.

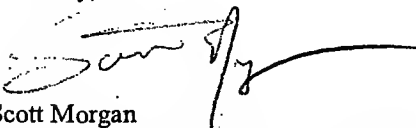
Please direct your comments to:

Michelle Julene
Sonoma County
2300 County Center Drive #120A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

with a copy to the State Clearinghouse in the Office of Planning and Research. Please refer to the SCH number noted above in all correspondence concerning this project.

If you have any questions about the environmental document review process, please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613.

Sincerely,


Scott Morgan
Associate Planner, State Clearinghouse

Attachments
cc: Lead Agency

6

**Document Details Report
State Clearinghouse Data Base**

SCH# 2003092022
Project Title Ragle Ranch Regional Park Off Leash Dog Area
Lead Agency Sonoma County

Type NOP Notice of Preparation
Description Develop an off leash dog area at the existing park. Off leash area would be fenced with double entry gate system, have water supply, waste collection and disposed supplies.

Lead Agency Contact

Name Michelle Julene
Agency Sonoma County
Phone 707 565-3962 **Fax**
email
Address 2300 County Center Drive #120A
City Santa Rosa **State** CA **Zip** 95403

Project Location

County Sonoma
City Sebastopol
Region
Cross Streets Bodega Avenue
Parcel No. 077-170-01
Township 7N **Range** 9W **Section** 27 **Base** Mtdiablo

Proximity to:

Highways 116-12
Airports
Railways P&SR
Waterways Atascadero Creek
Schools
Land Use Park
Public/Quasi Public
Public Facilities

Project Issues Aesthetic/Visual; Archaeologic-Historic; Noise; Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading; Wildlife; Landuse

Reviewing Agencies Resources Agency; Office of Historic Preservation; Department of Parks and Recreation; Department of Water Resources; Department of Fish and Game, Region 3; Native American Heritage Commission; State Lands Commission; California Highway Patrol; Caltrans, District 4; Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 1

Date Received 09/10/2003 **Start of Review** 09/10/2003 **End of Review** 10/09/2003

4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 372 373 374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393 394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401 402 403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420 421 422 423 424 425 426 427 428 429 430 431 432 433 434 435 436 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448 449 450 451 452 453 454 455 456 457 458 459 460 461 462 463 464 465 466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475 476 477 478 479 480 481 482 483 484 485 486 487 488 489 490 491 492 493 494 495 496 497 498 499 500 501 502 503 504 505 506 507 508 509 510 511 512 513 514 515 516 517 518 519 520 521 522 523 524 525 526 527 528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537 538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607 608 609 610 611 612 613 614 615 616 617 618 619 620 621 622 623 624 625 626 627 628 629 630 631 632 633 634 635 636 637 638 639 640 641 642 643 644 645 646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663 664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688 689 690 691 692 693 694 695 696 697 698 699 700 701 702 703 704 705 706 707 708 709 710 711 712 713 714 715 716 717 718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732 733 734 735 736 737 738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766 767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774 775 776 777 778 779 780 781 782 783 784 785 786 787 788 789 790 791 792 793 794 795 796 797 798 799 800 801 802 803 804 805 806 807 808 809 810 811 812 813 814 815 816 817 818 819 820 821 822 823 824 825 826 827 828 829 830 831 832 833 834 835 836 837 838 839 840 841 842 843 844 845 846 847 848 849 850 851 852 853 854 855 856 857 858 859 860 861 862 863 864 865 866 867 868 869 870 871 872 873 874 875 876 877 878 879 880 881 882 883 884 885 886 887 888 889 890 891 892 893 894 895 896 897 898 899 900 901 902 903 904 905 906 907 908 909 910 911 912 913 914 915 916 917 918 919 920 921 922 923 924 925 926 927 928 929 930 931 932 933 934 935 936 937 938 939 940 941 942 943 944 945 946 947 948 949 950 951 952 953 954 955 956 957 958 959 960 961 962 963 964 965 966 967 968 969 970 971 972 973 974 975 976 977 978 979 980 981 982 983 984 985 986 987 988 989 990 991 992 993 994 995 996 997 998 999 1000 1001 1002 1003 1004 1005 1006 1007 1008 1009 1010 1011 1012 1013 1014 1015 1016 1017 1018 1019 1020 1021 1022 1023 1024 1025 1026 1027 1028 1029 1030 1031 1032 1033 1034 1035 1036 1037 1038 1039 1040 1041 10

Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)

Dept. of Transportation 9
Gayle Rosander
District 9

District 9
Dept. of Transportation 1
Tom Dumas

Tom Dumas
District 10

Bill Flgge
District 11

Dept. of Transportation
Bob Joseph
District 12

Cal EPA
District 12

Air Resources Board

Jim Lerner
Transportation Project
Kurt Karperos

Industrial Projects
Mike Tollstrup


California Integrated Water Management Board
Sue O'Leary

**State Water Resources
Board**
Jim Hockenberry

State Water Resources
Division of Financial Assistance

Board
Student Intern, 401 Water
Certification Unit
Division of Water Quality

**State Water Resources
Mike Falkenstein
Division of Water Rights**


 Division of Water Rights
 Dept. of Toxic Substances
 CEQA Tracking Center

— — — — —

100



IN REPLY REFER TO:
1-1-03-SP-2990

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2605
Sacramento, California 95825

September 12, 2003

Ms. Michelle Julene
Sonoma County Regional Parks
2300 County Center Drive, Suite 120a
Santa Rosa, California 95403

Subject: Species List for Ragle Ranch Regional Park Off-leash Dog Area, Sonoma County, California

Dear Ms. Julene

We are sending the enclosed list (Enclosure A) in response to your September 8, 2003, notice. The list covers the following U.S. Geological Survey 7½ minute quad or quads: Sebastopol Quad.

Please read *Important Information About Your Species List* (enclosed). It explains how we made the list and describes your responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act. Please contact Dan Buford at (916) 414-6625, if you have any questions about the attached list or your responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act. For the fastest response to species list requests, address them to the attention of Species Lists at this address. You may fax requests to 414-6712 or 414-6713. You may also email them to harry_mossman@fws.gov.

Sincerely,

Roberta Gerson
Acting Deputy Assistant Field Supervisor

Enclosures

Important Information About Your Species List

How We Make Species Lists

We store information about endangered and threatened species lists by U.S. Geological Survey 7½ minute *quads*. The United States is divided into these quads, which are about the size of San Francisco. If you requested your list by quad name or number, that is what we used. Otherwise, we used the information you sent us to determine which quad or quads to use.

Animals

The animals on your species list are ones that occur within, *or may be affected by projects within*, the quads covered by the list. Fish and other aquatic species appear on your list if they are in the same watershed as your quad or if water use in your quad might affect them. Amphibians will be on the list for a quad or county if pesticides applied in that area may be carried to their habitat by air currents. Birds are shown regardless of whether they are resident or migratory. Relevant birds on the county list should be considered regardless of whether they appear on a quad list.

Plants

Any plants on your list are ones *that have actually been observed* in the quad or quads covered by the list. We have also included either a county species list or a list of species in nearby quads. We recommend that you check your project area for these plants. Plants may exist in an area without ever having been detected there.

Surveying

Some of the species on your list may not be affected by your project. A trained biologist or botanist, familiar with the habitat requirements of the species on your list, should determine whether they or habitats suitable for them may be affected by your project. We recommend that your surveys include any proposed and candidate species on your list. For plant surveys, we recommend using the enclosed *Guidelines for Conducting and Reporting Botanical Inventories for Federally Listed, Proposed and Candidate Species*. The results of your surveys should be published in any environmental documents prepared for your project.

State-Listed Species

If a species has been listed as threatened or endangered by the State of California, but not by us nor by the National Marine Fisheries Service, it will appear on your list as a Species of Concern. *However you should contact the California Department of Fish and Game for official information about these species.* Call (916) 322-2493 or write Marketing Manager, California Department of Fish and Game, Natural Diversity Data Base, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, California 95814.

threatened or endangered. By considering these species early in your planning process you may be able to avoid the problems that could develop if one of these candidates was listed before the end of your project.

Your list may contain a section called *Species of Concern*. This term includes former *category 2 candidate species* and other plants and animals of concern to the Service and other Federal, State and private conservation agencies and organizations. Some of these species may become candidate species in the future.

Wetlands

If your project will impact wetlands, riparian habitat, or other jurisdictional waters as defined by section 404 of the Clean Water Act and/or section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act, you will need to obtain a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Impacts to wetland habitats require site specific mitigation and monitoring. For questions regarding wetlands, please contact Mark Littlefield of this office at (916) 414-6580.

Updates

Our database is constantly updated as species are proposed, listed and delisted. If you address proposed, candidate and special concern species in your planning, this should not be a problem. We also continually strive to make our information as accurate as possible. Sometimes we learn that a particular species has a different range than we thought. This should not be a problem if you consider the species on the county or surrounding-quad lists that we have enclosed. If you have a long-term project or if your project is delayed, please feel free to contact us about getting a current list. You can also find out the current status of a species by going to the Service's Internet page: www.fws.gov

Your Responsibilities Under the Endangered Species Act

All plants and animals identified as *listed* on Enclosure A are fully protected under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. Section 9 of the Act and its implementing regulations prohibit the *take* of a federally listed wildlife species. Take is defined by the Act as "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect" any such animal. Take may include significant habitat modification or degradation where it actually kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding, or shelter (50 CFR §17.3).

Take incidental to an otherwise lawful activity may be authorized by one of two procedures:

If a Federal agency is involved with the permitting, funding, or carrying out of a project that may result in take, then that agency must engage in a *formal consultation* with the Service. Such consultation would result in a *biological opinion* addressing the anticipated effect of the project on listed and proposed species. The opinion may authorize a limited level of incidental take.

If no Federal agency is involved with the project, and federally listed species may be taken as part of the project, then you, the applicant, should apply for an *incidental take permit*. The Service may issue such a permit if you submit a satisfactory conservation plan for the species that would be affected by your project. Should your survey determine that federally listed or proposed species occur in the area and are likely to be affected by the project, we recommend that you work with this office and the California Department of Fish and Game to develop a plan that mitigates for the project's direct and indirect impacts to listed species and compensates for project-related loss of habitat. You should include the mitigation plan in any environmental documents you file.

Critical Habitat

When a species is listed as endangered or threatened, areas of habitat considered essential to its conservation may be designated as *critical habitat*. These areas may require special management considerations or protection. They provide needed space for growth and normal behavior; food, water, air, light, other nutritional or physiological requirements; cover or shelter; and sites for breeding, reproduction, rearing of offspring, germination or seed dispersal.

Although critical habitat may be designated on private or State lands, activities on these lands are not restricted unless there is Federal involvement in the activities or direct harm to listed wildlife.

If any species has proposed or designated critical habitat within a quad, there will be a separate line for this on the species list. Maps and boundary descriptions of the critical habitat may be found in the *Federal Register*. The information is also reprinted in the *Code of Federal Regulations* (50 CFR 17.95).

Candidate Species

We recommend that you address impacts to *candidate* species. We put plants and animals on our candidate list when we have enough scientific information to eventually propose them for listing as

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING AND REPORTING BOTANICAL INVENTORIES
FOR FEDERALLY LISTED, PROPOSED AND CANDIDATE PLANTS
(September 23, 1996)

These guidelines describe protocols for conducting botanical inventories for federally listed, proposed and candidate plants, and describe minimum standards for reporting results. The Service will use, in part, the information outlined below in determining whether the project under consideration may affect any listed, proposed or candidate plants, and in determining the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects.

Field inventories should be conducted in a manner that will locate listed, proposed, or candidate species (target species) that may be present. The entire project area requires a botanical inventory, except developed agricultural lands. The field investigator(s) should:

1. Conduct inventories at the appropriate times of year when target species are present and identifiable. Inventories will include all potential habitats. Multiple site visits during a field season may be necessary to make observations during the appropriate phenological stage of all target species.
2. If available, use a regional or local reference population to obtain a visual image of the target species and associated habitat(s). If access to reference populations is not available, investigators should study specimens from local herbaria.
3. List every species observed and compile a comprehensive list of vascular plants for the entire project site. Vascular plants need to be identified to a taxonomic level which allows rarity to be determined.
4. Report results of botanical field inventories that include:
 - a. a description of the biological setting, including plant community, topography, soils, potential habitat of target species, and an evaluation of environmental conditions, such as timing or quantity of rainfall, which may influence the performance and expression of target species
 - b. a map of project location showing scale, orientation, project boundaries, parcel size, and map quadrangle name
 - c. survey dates and survey methodology(ies)
 - d. if a reference population is available, provide a written narrative describing the target species reference population(s) used, and date(s) when observations were made
 - e. a comprehensive list of all vascular plants occurring on the project site for each habitat type
 - f. current and historic land uses of the habitat(s) and degree of site alteration
 - g. presence of target species off-site on adjacent parcels, if known
 - h. an assessment of the biological significance or ecological quality of the project site in a local

and regional context

5. If target species is(are) found, report results that additionally include:
 - a. a map showing federally listed, proposed and candidate species distribution as they relate to the proposed project
 - b. if target species is (are) associated with wetlands, a description of the direction and integrity of flow of surface hydrology. If target species is (are) affected by adjacent off-site hydrological influences, describe these factors.
 - c. the target species phenology and microhabitat, an estimate of the number of individuals of each target species per unit area; identify areas of high, medium and low density of target species over the project site, and provide acres of occupied habitat of target species. Investigators could provide color slides, photos or color copies of photos of target species or representative habitats to support information or descriptions contained in reports.
 - d. the degree of impact(s), if any, of the proposed project as it relates to the potential unoccupied habitat of target habitat.
6. Document findings of target species by completing California Native Species Field Survey Form(s) and submit form(s) to the Natural Diversity Data Base. Documentation of determinations and/or voucher specimens may be useful in cases of taxonomic ambiguities, habitat or range extensions.
7. Report as an addendum to the original survey, any change in abundance and distribution of target plants in subsequent years. Project sites with inventories older than three years from the current date of project proposal submission will likely need additional survey. Investigators need to assess whether an additional survey(s) is (are) needed.
8. Adverse conditions may prevent investigator(s) from determining presence or identifying some target species in potential habitat(s) of target species. Disease, drought, predation, or herbivory may preclude the presence or identification of target species in any year. An additional botanical inventory(ies) in a subsequent year(s) may be required if adverse conditions occur in a potential habitat(s). Investigator(s) may need to discuss such conditions.
9. Guidance from California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) regarding plant and plant community surveys can be found in Guidelines for Assessing the Effects of Proposed Developments on Rare and Endangered Plants and Plant Communities, 1984. Please contact the CDFG Regional Office for questions regarding the CDFG guidelines and for assistance in determining any applicable State regulatory requirements.

ENCLOSURE A

Endangered and Threatened Species that May Occur in or be Affected by
Projects in the Area of the Following California Counties

Reference File No. 1-1-03-SP-2990

September 12, 2003

SONOMA COUNTY

Listed Species

Mammals

Guadalupe fur seal, *Arctocephalus townsendi* (T) NMFS
Steller (=northern) sea-lion, *Eumetopias jubatus* (T) NMFS
blue whale, *Balaenoptera musculus* (E) NMFS
finback (=fin) whale, *Balaenoptera physalus* (E) NMFS
humpback whale, *Megaptera novaeangliae* (E) NMFS
right whale, *Eubalaena glacialis* (E) NMFS
salt marsh harvest mouse, *Reithrodontomys raviventris* (E)
sei whale, *Balaenoptera borealis* (E) NMFS
sperm whale, *Physeter catodon* (=macrocephalus) (E) NMFS

Birds

California brown pelican, *Pelecanus occidentalis californicus* (E)
California clapper rail, *Rallus longirostris obsoletus* (E)
Critical habitat, marbled murrelet, *Brachyramphus marmoratus* (T)
Critical habitat, western snowy plover, *Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus* (T)
bald eagle, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* (T)
marbled murrelet, *Brachyramphus marmoratus* (T)
northern spotted owl, *Strix occidentalis caurina* (T)
short-tailed albatross, *Diomedea albatrus* (E)
western snowy plover, *Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus* (T)

Reptiles

green turtle, *Chelonia mydas* (incl. *agassizi*) (T) NMFS
leatherback turtle, *Dermochelys coriacea* (E) NMFS
loggerhead turtle, *Caretta caretta* (T) NMFS
olive (=Pacific) ridley sea turtle, *Lepidochelys olivacea* (T) NMFS

Amphibians

California red-legged frog, *Rana aurora draytonii* (T)

Fish

California coastal chinook salmon, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* (T) NMFS
Central California Coastal steelhead, *Oncorhynchus mykiss* (T) NMFS
Central Valley spring-run chinook salmon, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* (T) NMFS

Critical habitat, coho salmon - central CA coast, *Oncorhynchus kisutch* (T) NMFS
Critical habitat, winter-run chinook salmon, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* (E) NMFS
Northern California steelhead, *Oncorhynchus mykiss* (T) NMFS
Sacramento splittail, *Pogonichthys macrolepidotus* (T)
coho salmon - central CA coast, *Oncorhynchus kisutch* (T) NMFS
delta smelt, *Hypomesus transpacificus* (T) *
tidewater goby, *Eucyclogobius newberryi* (E)
winter-run chinook salmon, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* (E) NMFS

Invertebrates

Behren's silverspot butterfly, *Speyeria zerene behrensii* (E)
California freshwater shrimp, *Syncaris pacifica* (E)
Myrtle's silverspot butterfly, *Speyeria zerene myrtleae* (E)
white abalone, *Haliotis sorenseni* (E) NMFS

Plants

Baker's larkspur, *Delphinium bakeri* (E) *
Baker's stickyseed, *Blennosperma bakeri* (E)
Burke's goldfields, *Lasthenia burkei* (E)
Clara Hunt's milk-vetch, *Astragalus clarianus* (E)
Hickman's potentilla (=cinquefoil), *Potentilla hickmanii* (E) *
Kenwood Marsh checkermallow (=checkerbloom), *Sidalcea oregana ssp. valida* (E)
Loch Lomond coyote-thistle (=button-celery), *Eryngium constancei* (E)
Pennell's bird's-beak, *Cordylanthus tenuis ssp. capillaris* (E)
Pitkin Marsh lily, *Lilium pardalinum ssp. pitkinense* (E)
Sebastopol meadowfoam, *Limnanthes vinculans* (E)
Sonoma alopecurus, *Alopecurus aequalis var. sonomensis* (E)
Sonoma spineflower, *Chorizanthe valida* (E) *
Vine Hill clarkia, *Clarkia imbricata* (E)
clover lupine [Tidestrom's lupine], *Lupinus tidestromii* (E)
many-flowered navarretia, *Navarretia leucocephala ssp. plieantha* (E)
showy Indian clover, *Trifolium amoenum* (E) *
soft bird's-beak, *Cordylanthus mollis ssp. mollis* (E) *
white sedge, *Carex albida* (E)
yellow larkspur, *Delphinium luteum* (E)

Proposed Species

Amphibians

California tiger salamander, *Ambystoma californiense* (PT)

Plants

Critical habitat, Baker's larkspur, *Delphinium bakeri* (PX)

Critical habitat, yellow larkspur, *Delphinium luteum* (PX)

Candidate Species

Birds

Western yellow-billed cuckoo, *Coccyzus americanus occidentalis* (C) *

Fish

Central Valley fall/late fall-run chinook salmon, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* (C) NMFS

Critical habitat, Central Valley fall/late fall-run chinook, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* (C) NMFS
green sturgeon, *Acipenser medirostris* (C)

Invertebrates

black abalone, *Haliotes cracherodii* (C) NMFS

Species of Concern

Mammals

California red tree vole, *Arborimus pomo* (SC)

Pacific western big-eared bat, *Corynorhinus (=Plecotus) townsendii townsendii* (SC)

Suisun ornate shrew, *Sorex ornatus sinuosus* (SC)

Yuma myotis bat, *Myotis yumanensis* (SC)

fringed myotis bat, *Myotis thysanodes* (SC)

gray whale, *Eschrichtius robustus* (D) NMFS

greater western mastiff-bat, *Eumops perotis californicus* (SC)

long-eared myotis bat, *Myotis evotis* (SC)

long-legged myotis bat, *Myotis volans* (SC)

Birds

Aleutian Canada goose, *Branta canadensis leucopareia* (D)

Allen's hummingbird, *Selasphorus sasin* (SC)

American bittern, *Botaurus lentiginosus* (SC)

American peregrine falcon, *Falco peregrinus anatum* (D)

Bell's sage sparrow, *Amphispiza belli belli* (SC)

California thrasher, *Toxostoma redivivum* (SC)

Cassin's auklet, *Ptychoramphus aleuticus* (SC)

Harlequin duck, *Histrionicus histrionicus* (SC)

San Pablo song sparrow, *Melospiza melodia samuelis* (SC)

Vaux's swift, *Chaetura vauxi* (SC)

Xantus' murrelet, *Synthliboramphus hypoleucus* (SC)

ashy storm-petrel, *Oceanodroma homochroa* (SC)

bank swallow, *Riparia riparia* (CA)
black oystercatcher, *Haematopus bachmani* (SC)
black rail, *Laterallus jamaicensis coturniculus* (CA)
black skimmer, *Rynchops niger* (SC)
black swift, *Cypseloides niger* (SC)
black turnstone, *Arenaria melanocephala* (SC)
black-footed albatross, *Diomedea nigripes* (SC)
ferruginous hawk, *Buteo regalis* (SC)
little willow flycatcher, *Empidonax traillii brewsteri* (CA)
loggerhead shrike, *Lanius ludovicianus* (SC)
long-billed curlew, *Numenius americanus* (SC)
marbled godwit, *Limosa fedoa* (SC)
olive-sided flycatcher, *Contopus cooperi* (SC)
red knot, *Calidris canutus* (SC)
red-breasted sapsucker, *Sphyrapicus ruber* (SC)
rufous hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus* (SC)
saltmarsh common yellowthroat, *Geothlypis trichas sinuosa* (SC)
tricolored blackbird, *Agelaius tricolor* (SC)
western burrowing owl, *Athene cunicularia hypugaea* (SC)
whimbrel, *Numenius phaeopus* (SC)
white-tailed (=black shouldered) kite, *Elanus leucurus* (SC)

Reptiles

California horned lizard, *Phrynosoma coronatum frontale* (SC)
northwestern pond turtle, *Clemmys marmorata marmorata* (SC)

Amphibians

Northern red-legged frog, *Rana aurora aurora* (SC)
foothill yellow-legged frog, *Rana boylei* (SC)
western spadefoot toad, *Spea hammondi* (SC)

Fish

Gualala roach, *Lavinia symmetricus parvipinnis* (SC)
Pacific lamprey, *Lampetra tridentata* (SC)
Russian River tule perch, *Hysterocarpus traski pomo* (SC)
longfin smelt, *Spirinchus thaleichthys* (SC)

Invertebrates

California linderiella fairy shrimp, *Linderiella occidentalis* (SC)
Leech's skyline diving beetle, *Hydroporus leechi* (SC)
Ricksecker's water scavenger beetle, *Hydrochara rickseckeri* (SC)

- Sonoma arctic skipper, *Carterocephalus palaemon* ssp. (SC)
- brownish dubiraphian riffle beetle, *Dubiraphia brunnescens* (SC)
- bumblebee scarab beetle, *Lichnanthe ursina* (SC)
- globose dune beetle, *Coelus globosus* (SC)
- sandy beach tiger beetle, *Cicindela hirticollis grandidi* (SC)

Plants

- Baker's goldfields, *Lasthenia macrantha* ssp. *bakeri* (SLC) *
- Baker's manzanita, *Arctostaphylos bakeri* ssp. *bakeri* (SC)
- Baker's narvarretia, *Navarretia leucocephala* ssp. *bakeri* (SC)
- Blasdale's bentgrass, *Agrostis blasdalei* var. *blasdalei* (SC)
- Bolander's reed grass, *Calamagrostis bolanderi* (SLC)
- California beaked-rush, *Rhynchospora californica* (SC)
- California saltbush, *Atriplex californica* (SLC)
- Calistoga ceanothus, *Ceanothus divergens* (SC)
- Cobb Mountain lupine, *Lupinus sericatus* (SLC)
- Colusa layia (=Colusa tidytip), *Layia septentrionalis* (SLC)
- Contact (Socrates) Mine jewelflower, *Streptanthus brachiatus* ssp. *brachiatus* (SC)
- Crystal Springs lessingia, *Lessingia arachnoidea* (SC)
- Davy's clarkia, *Clarkia davyi* (SLC)
- Dorr's Cabin jewelflower, *Streptanthus morrisonii* ssp. *hirtiflorus* (SC)
- Franciscan onion, *Allium peninsulare* var. *franciscanum* (SLC)
- Franciscan thistle, *Cirsium andrewsii* (SC) *
- Freed's jewelflower, *Streptanthus brachiatus* ssp. *hoffmanii* (SC)
- Gairdner's yampah, *Perideridia gairdneri* ssp. *gairdneri* (SC)
- Jepson's linanthus, *Linanthus jepsonii* (SLC)
- Kruckeberg's jewelflower, *Streptanthus morrisonii* ssp. *kruckebergii* (SC)
- Marin checkermallow (=checkerbloom), *Sidalcea hickmanii* ssp. *viridis* (SLC)
- Marin knotweed, *Polygonum marinense* (SLC)
- Mendocino (=pygmy) cypress, *Cupressus goveniana* ssp. *pigmaea* (SC)
- Morrison's jewelflower, *Streptanthus morrisonii* ssp. *morrisonii* (SC)
- Mt. Saint Helena morning-glory, *Calystegia collina* ssp. *oxyphylla* (SLC)
- Napa false indigo, *Amorpha californica* var. *napensis* (SLC)
- North Coast sand-verbena, *Abronia umbellata* ssp. *breviflora* (SC)
- Nuttall's milk-vetch, *Astragalus nuttallii* var. *virgatus* (SLC)
- Pacific cordgrass (=California cordgrass), *Spartina foliosa* (SLC)
- Petaluma popcornflower, *Plagiobothrys mollis* var. *vestitus* (SC) **
- Point Reyes checkerbloom, *Sidalcea calycosa* ssp. *rhizomata* (SLC)

Rincon Ridge ceanothus, *Ceanothus confusus* (SC)
Rincon manzanita, *Arctostaphylos stanfordiana* ssp. *decumbens* (SC)
Round-headed Chinese houses, *Collinsia corymbosa* (SC)
San Francisco (=bluehead, Chamisso's, dune) gilia, *Gilia capitata* ssp. *chamissonis* (SC)
San Francisco Bay spineflower, *Chorizanthe cuspidata* var. *cuspidata* (SC)
San Francisco wallflower, *Erysimum franciscanum* (SC)
San Mateo tree lupine, *Lupinus arboreus* var. *eximius* (SLC)
Santa Cruz clover, *Trifolium buckwestiorum* (SC)
Snow Mountain buckwheat, *Eriogonum nervulosum* (SC)
Sonoma ceanothus, *Ceanothus sonomensis* (SC)
Sonoma manzanita, *Arctostaphylos canescens* ssp. *sonomensis* (SLC)
St. Helena fawn lily, *Erythronium helenae* (SLC)
The Cedars globe-lily (=fairy-lantern), *Calochortus raichei* (SC)
The Cedars manzanita, *Arctostaphylos bakeri* ssp. *sublaevis* (SLC)
Three Peaks jewelflower, *Streptanthus morrisonii* ssp. *elatus* (SC)
Thurber's reed grass, *Calamagrostis crassiglumis* (SC)
Tiburon buckwheat, *Eriogonum caninum* (SLC) *
Vine Hill ceanothus, *Ceanothus foliosus* var. *vineatus* (SC)
Vine Hill manzanita, *Arctostaphylos densiflora* (SC)
alkali milk-vetch, *Astragalus tener* var. *tener* (SC) *
beaked tracyina, *Tracyina rostrata* (SC)
bent-flowered fiddleneck, *Amsinckia lunaris* (SLC)
big-scale (=California) balsamroot, *Balsamorhiza macrolepis* var. *macrolepis* (SLC)
coast lily, *Lilium maritimum* (SC)
coast rock-cress, *Arabis blepharophylla* (SLC)
coastal bluff morning-glory, *Calystegia purpurata* ssp. *saxicola* (SLC)
curly-leaved (=curlyleaf) monardella, *Monardella undulata* (SC) *
deceiving (=salt) sedge, *Carex saliniformis* (=Carex hassei) (SLC)
dwarf soaproot (=wavyleaf soap plant), *Chlorogalum pomeridianum* var. *minus* (SLC)
fragrant fritillary (= prairie bells), *Fritillaria liliacea* (SC)
holly-leaved ceanothus, *Ceanothus purpureus* (SLC)
large-flowered (=flower) linanthus, *Linanthus grandiflorus* (SC)
legenere, *Legenere limosa* (SC) *
maple-leaved checkerbloom, *Sidalcea malachroides* (SLC)
marsh microseris (=marsh silverpuffs), *Microseris paludosa* (SLC)
narrow-anthered California brodiaea, *Brodiaea californica* var. *leptandra* (SLC)
narrow-leaved daisy (=serpentine fleabane), *Erigeron angustatus* (SLC)

northcoast (=Point Reyes) bird's-beak, *Cordylanthus maritimus* ssp. *palustris* (SC)
northcoast semaphore grass, *Pleuropogon hooverianus* (SC)
perennial goldfields, *Lasthenia macrantha* ssp. *macrantha* (SLC)
pink sand-verbena, *Abronia umbellata* ssp. *umbellata* (SLC)
purple owl's-clover (=wideleaf Indian paintbrush), *Castilleja exserta* ssp. *latifolia* (SLC)
purple-stemmed (=dwarf) checkerbloom, *Sidalcea malviflora* ssp. *purpurea* (SLC)
robust monardella (=robust coyote mint), *Monardella villosa* ssp. *globosa* (SLC)
rose linanthus, *Linanthus rosaceus* (SC) *
salt marsh owl's clover (=johnny-nip), *Castilleja ambigua* ssp. *ambigua* (SLC)
seashore (=coast, =beach) starwort, *Stellaria littoralis* (SC)
secund jewelflower, *Streptanthus glandulosus* var. *hoffmanii* (SC)
serpentine (=Cleveland's) cryptantha, *Cryptantha clevelandii* (SLC)
supple daisy, *Erigeron supplex* (SC)
swamp harebell, *Campanula californica* (SC)
thin-lobbed (=Santa Rosa) horkelia, *Horkelia tenuiloba* (SLC)
two-carpeled dwarf-flax (=western flax), *Hesperolinon bicarpellatum* (SC)
water sack (=saline) clover, *Trifolium depauperatum* var. *hydrophilum* (SC)
western leatherwood, *Dirca occidentalis* (SLC)
woolly-headed (=San Francisco) spineflower, *Chorizanthe cuspidata* var. *villosa* (SC)
woolly-headed gilia, *Gilia capitata* ssp. *tomentosa* (SC) *
yarrow-leaf (=manyleaf, dark-eyed) gilia, *Gilia millefoliata* (SLC)

KEY:

(E)	<i>Endangered</i>	Listed (in the Federal Register) as being in danger of extinction.
(T)	<i>Threatened</i>	Listed as likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future.
(P)	<i>Proposed</i>	Officially proposed (in the Federal Register) for listing as endangered or threatened.
(PX)	<i>Proposed Critical Habitat</i>	Proposed as an area essential to the conservation of the species.
(C)	<i>Candidate</i>	Candidate to become a <i>proposed</i> species.
(SC)	<i>Species of Concern</i>	Other species of concern to the Service.
(SLC)	<i>Species of Local Concern</i>	Species of local or regional concern or conservation significance.
(D)	<i>Delisted</i>	Delisted. Status to be monitored for 5 years.
(CA)	<i>State-Listed</i>	Listed as threatened or endangered by the State of California.
NMFS	NMFS species	Under jurisdiction of the National Marine Fisheries Service. Contact them directly.
*	<i>Extirpated</i>	Possibly extirpated from the area.
**	<i>Extinct</i>	Possibly extinct
	<i>Critical Habitat</i>	Area essential to the conservation of a species.

ENCLOSURE A

Endangered and Threatened Species that May Occur in
or be Affected by Projects in the Selected Quads Listed Below

Reference File No. 1-1-03-SP-2990

September 12, 2003

QUAD: 502A SEBASTOPOL

Listed Species

Birds

bald eagle, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* (T)

northern spotted owl, *Strix occidentalis caurina* (T)

Fish

coho salmon - central CA coast, *Oncorhynchus kisutch* (T) NMFS

Central California Coastal steelhead, *Oncorhynchus mykiss* (T) NMFS

Central Valley steelhead, *Oncorhynchus mykiss* (T) NMFS

California coastal chinook salmon, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* (T) NMFS

Sacramento splittail, *Pogonichthys macrolepidotus* (T)

Invertebrates

California freshwater shrimp, *Syncaris pacifica* (E)

Plants

Sonoma alopecurus, *Alopecurus aequalis* var. *sonomensis* (E)

Baker's stickyseed, *Blennosperma bakeri* (E)

white sedge, *Carex albida* (E)

Sonoma spineflower, *Chorizanthe valida* (E) *

Vine Hill clarkia, *Clarkia imbricata* (E)

yellow larkspur, *Delphinium luteum* (E) *

Burke's goldfields, *Lasthenia burkei* (E)

Pitkin Marsh lily, *Lilium pardalinum* ssp. *pitkinense* (E)

Sebastopol meadowfoam, *Limnanthes vincularis* (E)

showy Indian clover, *Trifolium amoenum* (E) *

Proposed Species

Amphibians

California tiger salamander, *Ambystoma californiense* (PT)

Candidate Species

Birds

Western yellow-billed cuckoo, *Coccyzus americanus occidentalis* (C) *?

Species of Concern

Mammals

- Pacific western big-eared bat, *Corynorhinus (=Plecotus) townsendii townsendii* (SC)
- greater western mastiff-bat, *Eumops perotis californicus* (SC)
- long-eared myotis bat, *Myotis evotis* (SC)
- fringed myotis bat, *Myotis thysanodes* (SC)
- long-legged myotis bat, *Myotis volans* (SC)
- Yuma myotis bat, *Myotis yumanensis* (SC)

Birds

- tricolored blackbird, *Agelaius tricolor* (SC)
- western burrowing owl, *Athene cunicularia hypugaea* (SC)
- oak titmouse, *Baeolophus inornatus* (SLC)
- Vaux's swift, *Chaetura vauxi* (SC)
- black swift, *Cypseloides niger* (SC)
- white-tailed (=black shouldered) kite, *Elanus leucurus* (SC)
- little willow flycatcher, *Empidonax traillii brewsteri* (CA)
- prairie falcon, *Falco mexicanus* (SC)
- American peregrine falcon, *Falco peregrinus anatum* (D)
- loggerhead shrike, *Lanius ludovicianus* (SC)
- long-billed curlew, *Numenius americanus* (SC)
- bank swallow, *Riparia riparia* (CA)
- Allen's hummingbird, *Selasphorus sasin* (SC)
- California thrasher, *Toxostoma redivivum* (SC)

Reptiles

- northwestern pond turtle, *Clemmys marmorata marmorata* (SC)
- California horned lizard, *Phrynosoma coronatum frontale* (SC)

Amphibians

- Northern red-legged frog, *Rana aurora aurora* (SC)
- foothill yellow-legged frog, *Rana boylei* (SC)

Fish

- Russian River tule perch, *Hysterocarpus traski pomo* (SC)
- Pacific lamprey, *Lampetra tridentata* (SC)

Invertebrates

- Sonoma arctic skipper, *Carterocephalus palaemon ssp.* (SC)
- Ricksecker's water scavenger beetle, *Hydrochara rickseckeri* (SC)
- California linderiella fairy shrimp, *Linderiella occidentalis* (SC)

Plants

- Vine Hill manzanita, *Arctostaphylos densiflora* (SC)
 Bolander's reed grass, *Calamagrostis bolanderi* (SLC)
 Thurber's reed grass, *Calamagrostis crassiglumis* (SC)
 swamp harebell, *Campanula californica* (SC) *
 Rincon Ridge ceanothus, *Ceanothus confusus* (SC) *
 Vine Hill ceanothus, *Ceanothus foliosus* var. *vineatus* (SC)
 thin-lobbed (=Santa Rosa) horkelia, *Horkelia tenuiloba* (SLC)
 Baker's goldfields, *Lasthenia macrantha* ssp. *bakeri* (SLC) *
 legenere, *Legenere limosa* (SC)
 Jepson's linanthus, *Linanthus jepsonii* (SLC)
 marsh microseris (=marsh silverpuffs), *Microseris paludosa* (SLC)
 Baker's narvarretia, *Navarretia leucocephala* ssp. *bakeri* (SC)
 northcoast semaphore grass, *Pleuropogon hooverianus* (SC)
 California beaked-rush, *Rhynchospora californica* (SC)
 water sack (=saline) clover, *Trifolium depauperatum* var. *hydrophilum* (SC) *

KEY:

(E)	<i>Endangered</i>	Listed (in the Federal Register) as being in danger of extinction.
(T)	<i>Threatened</i>	Listed as likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future.
(P)	<i>Proposed</i>	Officially proposed (in the Federal Register) for listing as endangered or threatened.
(PX)	<i>Proposed Critical Habitat</i>	Proposed as an area essential to the conservation of the species.
(C)	<i>Candidate</i>	Candidate to become a <i>proposed</i> species.
(SC)	<i>Species of Concern</i>	May be endangered or threatened. Not enough biological information has been gathered to support listing at this time.
(SLC)	<i>Species of Local Concern</i>	Species of local or regional concern or conservation significance.
(MB)	<i>Migratory Bird</i>	Migratory bird
NMFS	NMFS species	Under the jurisdiction of the National Marine Fisheries Service. Contact them directly.
(D)	<i>Delisted</i>	Delisted. Status to be monitored for 5 years.
(CA)	<i>State-Listed</i>	Listed as threatened or endangered by the State of California.
(*)	<i>Extirpated</i>	Possibly extirpated from this quad.
(**)	<i>Extinct</i>	Possibly extinct.
	<i>Critical Habitat</i>	Area essential to the conservation of a species.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

P.O. BOX 23660
OAKLAND, CA 94623-0660
(510) 286-4444
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September 22, 2003

SON-116-25.69
SON116482
SCH 2003092022

Ms. Michelle Julene
Sonoma County Regional Parks
2300 County Center Drive, Suite 120A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Dear Ms. Julene:

Ragle Ranch Regional Park Off-Leash Dog Area – Notice of Preparation (NOP)

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation in the environmental review process for the proposed project. We have reviewed the NOP and are particularly interested in reviewing a discussion of the project's potential impacts on State transportation facilities once the project is completed and becomes open to public use. We look forward to reviewing the Draft Environmental Impact Report for this project when it becomes available, and expect to receive a copy from the State Clearinghouse.

Should you require further information or have any questions regarding this letter, please call Maija Cottle of my staff at (510) 286-5737.

Sincerely,

TIMOTHY C. SABLE
District Branch Chief
IGR/CEQA

c: State Clearinghouse



California Regional Water Quality Control Board

North Coast Region

William R. Massey, Chairman

Justin H. Hickox
Secretary for
Environmental
Protection

Internet Address: <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb1/>
5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California 95403
Phone: 1 (877) 721-9203 (toll free) • Office: (707) 576-2220 • FAX: (707) 523-0135



Gray Davis
Governor

October 8, 2003

Ms. Michelle Julene
Sonoma County Regional Parks
2300 County Center Drive, #120A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Dear Ms. Julene:

Subject: Comments on the Notice of Preparation for the Ragle Ranch Regional Park Off Leash Dog Area – SCH No. 2003092022

File: Ragle Ranch Dog Park, Sebastopol, Sonoma County

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Notice of Preparation (NOP). The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) is a responsible agency for this project, as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The potential impacts of the project were discussed with you on a site visit conducted on September 30, 2003. These comments reflect the general water quality concerns for the project, followed by concerns that are specific to each proposed site.

Surface Water Impacts

There do not appear to be any surface waters within any of the proposed sites. It is my understanding that the sites were all investigated for wetlands species and that none were found within the site boundaries. There are also no swales or other drainages that crossed within the sites. If a new site is proposed that will directly impact a wetland or other surface water, or a later investigation finds evidence of surface waters within one of the currently proposed sites, this issue will need to be revisited. As it stands, none of the proposed sites would require disturbance in a "Water of the State".

Storm water

Land disturbances on proposed construction projects of 1 acre or more require a construction storm water permit. Many of the proposed locations are less than one acre, and even those which are more than one acre will not require mechanical disturbance of the soil over the entire site in order to implement the project. However, storm water will be an issue of concern for the off-leash area, regardless of where it is placed. Under the authority of the California Water Code, the Regional Water Board may issue Waste Discharge Requirements for any facility which

California Environmental Protection Agency



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discharges or threatens to discharge waste to Waters of the State. At the current time, WDRs do not appear to be necessary for the project as long as appropriate Best Management Practices are adhered to. The storm water issues can be separated as follows:

- Dog waste, in the form of either urine or feces, will result in an increase of nutrients and bacteria to surface waters. An effective feces removal program can alleviate the bacterial concerns; urine, on the other hand, cannot be so easily controlled. While many dogs already use the park, the urine is spread over a much larger area. In a dog park, the concentration will be increased. This nutrient loading can be minimized by locating the off-leash area away from any surface waters, and maintaining vegetated buffer areas around the enclosure.
- It was indicated that most of the sites could not be turfed, due to concerns about irrigation impacts to native oaks (among other impacts). Whether the areas are turfed or not, heavy use in the enclosure will likely result in a loss of ground cover. The soil may become compacted and bare. Bare soils present an erosion and sedimentation problem, which should be addressed. Again, because of this erosive potential, the site should not be in close proximity to any surface water and should have a vegetated buffer area around the enclosure. We also discussed the possibility of closing the area for maintenance early in October, so that the area can be tilled and seeded until grass establishes again. Once the grass is established, the park can be reopened and the erosion problems during the winter will be lessened.

The following are site-specific comments:

- Site 1 – This site is in an open area that is approximately 1.0 acre in size and slopes moderately toward the west. This site will be difficult to control for erosion, due to the speed of run-off that will be generated by the slope. Furthermore, a large swale is a short distance away from the end of the slope. This swale has no defined bed and banks, but is more like a small flood plain area where slopes converge, and it supports hydric species and a mature canopy. Due to the steepness of slope and the proximity to a surface water, this site is a higher water quality risk.
- Site 2 – This site is in a moderately open area that is approximately 0.6 acre in size and slopes very gently toward the west. The site will be much easier to control for erosion, but is immediately adjacent to the same swale mentioned in the site one comments. There will be very little room for a buffer that will prevent the direct input of nutrients and any sediment that escapes control. Due to the proximity to a surface water, this site is a higher water quality risk.
- Site 3 – This site is a small area approximately 0.1 acre in size. It is bordered by the tennis court, baseball diamond, and Ragle Road. Although currently the site includes a large mound, that mound would be graded down to make the site flat. The area is not near a

California Environmental Protection Agency



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surface water and could be turfed and easily maintained. This site is a lower water quality risk.

Site 4 – This site is shaped like a barbell, is approximately 0.3 acres in size, and slopes mildly to the west. There was no surface water apparent nearby; instead, the end of the slope terminates in a graveled parking lot for horse trailers. The gravel area would help filter sediments and nutrients out of the run-off, and the buffer area around the site will probably provide enough room to effectively manage the run-off. This site is a lower water quality risk.

Site 5 – This site is an open area approximately 0.4 acres in size, and slopes to the south. The slope becomes steeper as you leave the site and terminates in a creek approximately 100 feet away. The buffer area between the creek and site will probably provide enough room to effectively manage the run-off. However, the slope will still make control more difficult than in other proposed sites. This site is a more moderate water quality risk.

Site 6 – This site is an open area approximately 0.8 acres in size, and slopes very steeply to the west. The slope is quite long and terminates in a creek. The erosion potential of this site is very high, and the lack of any flat areas will make management quite difficult. This site is a high water quality risk.

The Regional Water Board comments reflect our opinion of the risk each site poses, based on site characteristics and the probable difficulty in controlling any problems. With the implementation of the appropriate best management practices and mitigation, any of the proposed sites could be chosen.

We look forward to working with you on this and future projects. If you have any questions or comments regarding this matter, please contact me at (707) 576-2065.

Sincerely,


John L. Short

Senior Water Resources Control Engineer

LEH:tab/saddiohills.doc

cc: Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse, 1400 Tenth Street,
P.O. Box 3044, Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

California Environmental Protection Agency



Recycled Paper

"The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see our Web-site at: <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/>."

Voicemail from Alan Buckmann – October 9, 2003

Yeah, Michelle, hi, Alan Buckmann. I just wanted to get back to you on the off-leash dog area. I know you are preparing an Initial Study on that. I went out - I actually walked out - and looked at all the sites really carefully.

Now, several of the large ones that are proposed have huge numbers of squirrel or rodent holes on them. And I know there are owls in those areas, and red tail hawk. That's a lot of their major food supply. The other thing that got me concerned is, looking how pliable the soils are on most of those sites. They can't take a lot of traffic; they turn to powder. And if you get too many people out there, they're going to turn it to powder really quick. So, in looking at it, I think you need to have areas that are irrigated, you know, something in lawn.

And you have a little larger and most of the sites really aren't too good for that. I was looking at that one site that's out near the Veteran's Memorial. That's one area that could be, you know, with another little berm in there and to modify the drainage in there just slightly, and the outlet on it, you could probably raise some of that up, level it out just a tad and that would make a really good area. And then there's right across the path from that is another area on the other side that could be modified. And then the one by the tennis court. I didn't really like the others. So, just to let you know I was going to make comments on that. I guess Peace Garden is the one I was thinking of in Number 5. Looked to me like the best. And then there's another one on the other trail.

I also wanted to make some comments about those trails, some of those are starting to rut, and you really need to put down some shale rock under those, make a wider path, and dirt mixed in so some grass will grow but it'll anchor those really solid.

I don't like Number 6 at all; I really think that ought to be scratched, down off in on the other side. I don't think that's really appropriate. One of the reasons I like 5 and 3 is they're right close to parking lots and public use areas, which really makes more sense.

So, anyway, those are my general comments. I'm going to put a letter together on that, so if I'm not too late on that, and I'll be sending it over to you. And that's just generally my comments. Anyway, talk to you soon. I'm at (707) 944-5537.



COUNTY OF SONOMA

PERMIT AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95403
(707) 565-1900 FAX (707) 565-1103

DATE: September 24, 2003
TO: Sonoma County Regional Parks Department
ATTN: Michelle Julene

FROM: Jon Tracy, R.E.H.S., Project Review Section, Health

PROJECT TYPE: Initial Study

SUBJECT: Project: Ragle Ranch Regional Park Off-leash Dog Area
Name: Sonoma County Regional Parks
Purpose: To develop an off leash dog park within Ragle Park.

Comments:

1. The method of dispensing and disposal of water is crucial to curbing the dispersal of disease organisms among dogs and curbing the propagation of mosquitos. A hard, well drained and easily cleaned surface (such as concrete) is needed where water for dog dishes is dispensed and where the dogs drink. A collection and disposal system for drain water is needed to avoid mosquito production in standing water and to avoid muddy areas that discourage the use of the facility. Curbing mosquito populations is a high public health priority now that West Nile virus is in the State and is expected to be spread throughout the State via migrating birds.
2. We request the installation and regular servicing (at least once every seven days) of refuse containers at the dog park. Regular servicing of the refuse containers will remove animal waste before flies can hatch.
3. Selection of a site that is free of poison oak (*Rhus diversiloba*), or implementation of a poison oak eradication program will greatly reduce the transmission of strongly irritating and potentially debilitating plant oils to dogs and dog handlers.
4. Hours of use of the dog park should be limited to control noise impacts on residential areas bordering Ragle Park. At a maximum, hours should not exceed 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM (the daytime noise standard found in the Sonoma County General Plan).

Please feel free to contact Jon Tracy, Project Review Health Specialist at (707) 565-1683, Monday through Friday, should you have any questions on the above information.



NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN INITIAL STUDY

SONOMA COUNTY REGIONAL PARKS
PHONE: (707) 565-2041

2300 COUNTY CENTER DRIVE, SUITE 120a

SANTA ROSA, CA 95403
FAX: (707) 565-3642

September 8, 2003

The Sonoma County Regional Parks Department (Regional Parks) is preparing an Initial Study for the proposed:

Ragle Ranch Regional Park Off-leash Dog Area

Introduction

Regional Parks is requesting comments from responsible and trustee agencies, property owners in the project vicinity, and other interested parties regarding the scope and content of the Initial Study. Responsible and trustee agencies are requested to provide comments regarding the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to that agency's statutory responsibilities in relation to the proposed project. Regional Parks is also interested in comments from property owners and other interested parties regarding what should be included in the Initial Study.

Regional Parks staff will prepare the Initial Study in accordance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines. An Initial Study is a preliminary analysis of a proposed project's potentially significant environmental effects regarding construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed project. After the Initial Study is prepared, Regional Parks will present the document to the Sonoma County Environmental Review Committee (ERC), who will determine whether a Negative Declaration or an Environmental Impact Report should be prepared. Regional Parks will invite those on the project mailing list to attend the ERC meeting.

Notice of Preparation Comment Period

Please send written comments to Michelle Julene, Environmental Specialist, in care of the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department, at the address listed above.

The comment period for the Notice of Preparation will close at 5:00 p.m. on **October 10, 2003**, which is 33 days after mailing of this document. Please note that while the comment period for the Notice of Preparation has a closing date, interested parties are encouraged to contact Regional Parks staff at any time during the process to receive an update of the process, to ask questions, and share information.

Public Scoping Meeting

Regional Parks will host a Public Scoping Meeting regarding the proposed project. The Public Scoping Meeting is not a required part of the CEQA process. Regional Parks staff will present the conceptual plan for the Ragle Park Off-leash Dog Area, and will discuss the respective planning and environmental processes. Then, we will walk through Ragle Park to view six alternative sites. Regional Parks would like to hear from the community as well as the responsible and trustee agencies regarding support for the proposed project and regarding concerns. The Public Scoping Meeting is scheduled as follows:

**September 25, 2003, 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Ragle Ranch Regional Park, Group Picnic Area
500 Ragle Road, Sebastopol**

Regional Parks Contact Person

Please call Michelle Julene at (707) 565-3962 if you have questions regarding this Notice of Preparation. Documents relating to the proposed project are available for review at the Sonoma County Regional Parks office. Please call the main office at (707) 565-2041 to set up an appointment to review the documents.

Madrone Audubon Society
P.O.Box 1911
Santa Rosa, CA 95402
October 8, 2003

Michele Julene
Environmental Specialist
Sonoma County Regional Parks Department
2300 County Center Drive, Suite 120a
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

To: Michele Julene

I am writing in regard to the Notice of Preparation on Ragle Ranch Regional Park Off-leash Dog Area. I am writing on behalf of the nearly 2000 members of the Madrone Audubon Society here in Sonoma County.

After reviewing the original site several months ago I do appreciate your expanding to 6 alternate sites for consideration. We are very concerned about several sites (Area 1, Area 2, and Area 4) that are in the middle of good quality oak woodland habitat and would recommend that you eliminate them from any further consideration. The following birds were observed recently on one visit to the oak woodland/meadow area being proposed for this dog park:

Bewick's Wren, Marsh Wren, White-Crowned Sparrow, Golden-Crowned Sparrow, Hermit Thrush, Song Sparrow, Western Bluebird, Northern Mockingbird, Scrub Jay, Red-Winged Blackbird, Brewer's Blackbird, Hutton's Vireo, Townsend's Warbler, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Bushtit, Plain Titmouse, California Towhee, Spotted Towhee, Northern Flicker, Downy Woodpecker, Yellow-Rumped Warbler, Western Tanager, and California Quail

As you can see from the variety and number of species seen on one visit this is quite a rich habitat. That is often the case when you have an "edge effect" or ecotone as two habitats, oak woodland and grassland/meadow, meet. The diversity there is often greatest.

These meadows also have good native wildflower displays of poppy and lupine in Spring. These areas are used extensively for passive recreation of walking, sitting and observing nature. They are very natural but easily accessible—a valuable combination. Traffic from dogs and owners would disrupt and disturb wildlife as well as damage wildflowers.

These areas, 1, 2, and 4 should certainly be eliminated from dog park consideration.

Area 3 is smaller but would cause least disturbance and does have a water supply already available. It is also fairly level and easily accessible from parking.

The slope of Area 6 makes it uncomfortable for some people to use and ball play would be difficult as well.

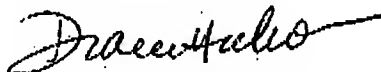
If Area 5 would be considered it would be best to plant native shrubs along the outside of the fence nearer the Peace Garden to visually minimize disturbance. Signage could also indicate that this dog area

would be closed occasionally if ceremonies are being held at the Peace Garden.

It would be best to provide additional alternative sites that are flat and would have irrigated turf. On a personal note, my dog and I have used dog parks at Galvin in Santa Rosa and Sonoma Valley in Glen Ellen. One has shorter fencing, which is less visually disruptive. One has drainage problems and has to be closed frequently in winter when the turf is soggy; bark chips have been used in a rolling area. Galvin is a smaller site but it is still used regularly.

I would hope that you will continue to look for more appropriate dog park sites in the Sebastopol and West County area, since the Master Plan for Ragle Park does not include such activity.

Sincerely,



Diane Richwa, Conservation Chair

Sebastopol, CA

Sept. 18, 2003

Dear Ms. Tulene -

The public has steadily been losing park open-space to special interests. The proposed dog park at Ragle Ranch Park is an example. I do not wish to donate any portion of the park to dog owners who chose pets they cannot accomodate on their private property. I also do not want the noise, odor, and liability for the taxpayer that would result.

In 50 or 100 yrs., natural open space will be more precious than a chain-link dog enclosure.

Sincerely,

Yolanda Wood

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SEP 19 2003

REGIONAL PARKS DEPT
COUNTY OF SONOMA

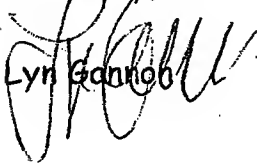
Lyn Gannon
3700 Burnside Road
Sebastopol CA 95472
September 22, 2003

Michelle Julene, RPD Enviromental Specialist
Sonoma County Regional Parks
2300 County Center Drive, Suite 120A
Santa Rosa CA 95403-3009

Dear Michelle,

I support the efforts of the County Parks Dept to establish an Off-Leash Dog Area at Ragle Ranch Regional Park. I walk my dog there at least once a week (on leash). I look forward to having a designated doggie play area which does not impinge upon other park users.

Sincerely,


Lyn Gannon

Sept 26 '84

Sonoma Co. Regional Parks
Attn: Jim Cengel, Director

Dear Mr. Cengel,

I am writing to represent a group of us who walk our dogs daily in Ragle Park - year around. We speak for a number of us who walk during the same time of day. Many are senior citizens and most of our dogs are ^{small} household pets. We also meet young mothers with their pre-school children, some in strollers. Obviously we are only a small portion of the daily walkers at Ragle Park.

The park is home to numerous activities for adults and children. As my husband and I live across from the park we can view all the activity every day of the week.

A dog park would be a very disturbing addition to an already active agenda in the park, and more importantly - a two acre site devoted to dogs seems inappropriate for this wooded, grassland area.

As a dog owner, one is responsible for his activities on a leash, (that is the law) and a larger dog would require a back yard that would accommodate him. Walks in the park, are good exercise for dogs and their owners,

Not in an area where the environmental impact would be inappropriate for our lovely park.

The scenic value of our Oak Habitat would, in time - be devastated.

I do not believe the Master Plan and the desires of the Ragle family members would include the addition of a dog park within this pristine land.

A liability and safety problem would be involved, and it will prevent the usage of the park for people to enjoy the parks and grounds in a dog park area.

We need the Park and Recreation Departments protection of this valuable and as yet wild life land that remains in Ragle Park.

I think, as in Sebastopol should find an appropriate area for a dog park - in the City limits, where it could be supervised and controlled.

Very sincerely,

Trudie M. Collins

MAILED 1972

NOV 12 1972

NOV 12 1972

Jim and Trudie Collins
447 Ragle Road
Sebastopol, CA 95672

October 5, 2003

I am writing in regards to the proposed dog park. I would prefer that there not be a dog park at Ragle Ranch. I am particularly against proposed site number 1 for these reasons:

- 1. Has a substantial adverse effect on scenic vista**
 - The proposed dog park would affect the peaceful and beautiful views of the wild flowers in the spring and the general serenity of the area. The picnic area next to this site would lose these pleasing vistas. (Pictures of site 1 in the spring are included with this letter).
 - This site is very visible from the paved path that many people walk to enjoy nature.
- 2. Will degrade existing visual character**
 - The open oak meadow would be visually disrupted by fencing. The area would no longer be able to reseed and the spring bloom will no longer occur.
- 3. Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people**
 - The animals will be urinating as well as defecating in this area. This odor would certainly not be appealing to those picnicking near by.
 - Although dog feces would hopefully be picked up by the dog owners, there is nothing that can be done about the urinating that will be concentrated in this one area.
- 4. The project would result in substantial soil erosion and loss of top soil**
 - The constant trampling and digging of the very soft and sandy soil would definitely cause erosion.
 - The site slopes toward the creek and the runoff would bring silt and possibly pea gravel, if used, into the creek.
- 5. Substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity**
 - The constant barking of dogs would increase the noise level tremendously and would disturb picnickers and walkers on the path.

6. Incremental effects of this project site are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects

- The park has already allowed tennis courts, soccer fields, baseball fields and volleyball courts. Little by little the open and tranquil parts of the park are being lost.

7. Degrading the quality of the environment for wildlife

- Many animals are seen in this site daily. I have seen quail, rabbits, squirrels, weasels and birds as well as birds of prey. They will lose this site as hunting and breeding grounds.

Please consider the negative impacts when choosing a site for the dog park. I have many of the same concerns for the alternate sites. The best site with the least environmental and visual impact is site 3. This area is already very developed.

Site 1 is a full acre of one of the most beautiful and easily accessible undeveloped areas of the park. Let us also think about the elderly and the handicapped that use this path to gain access to nature.

I am a dog owner and love my Pugsley dearly. I do not believe that his life will be negatively impacted if he could not romp on a one acre wooded parcel with his four legged friends. I do believe however, that the environment of this site and the effect of its loss on people who are seeking a bit of nature, especially the elderly and handicapped, would be tremendous. Please consider these negative impacts before you allow this beautiful site to "go to the dogs."

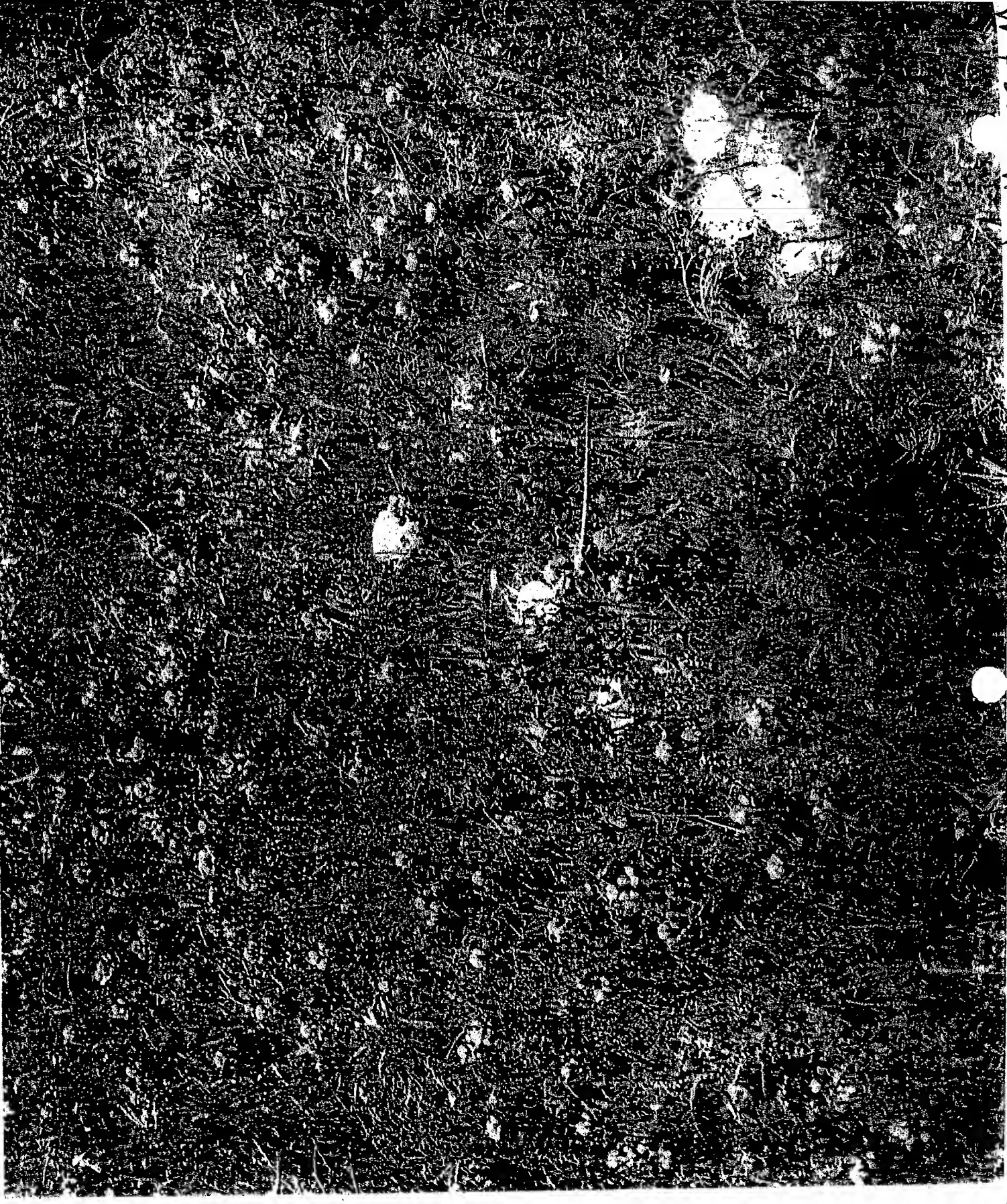
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Madgett

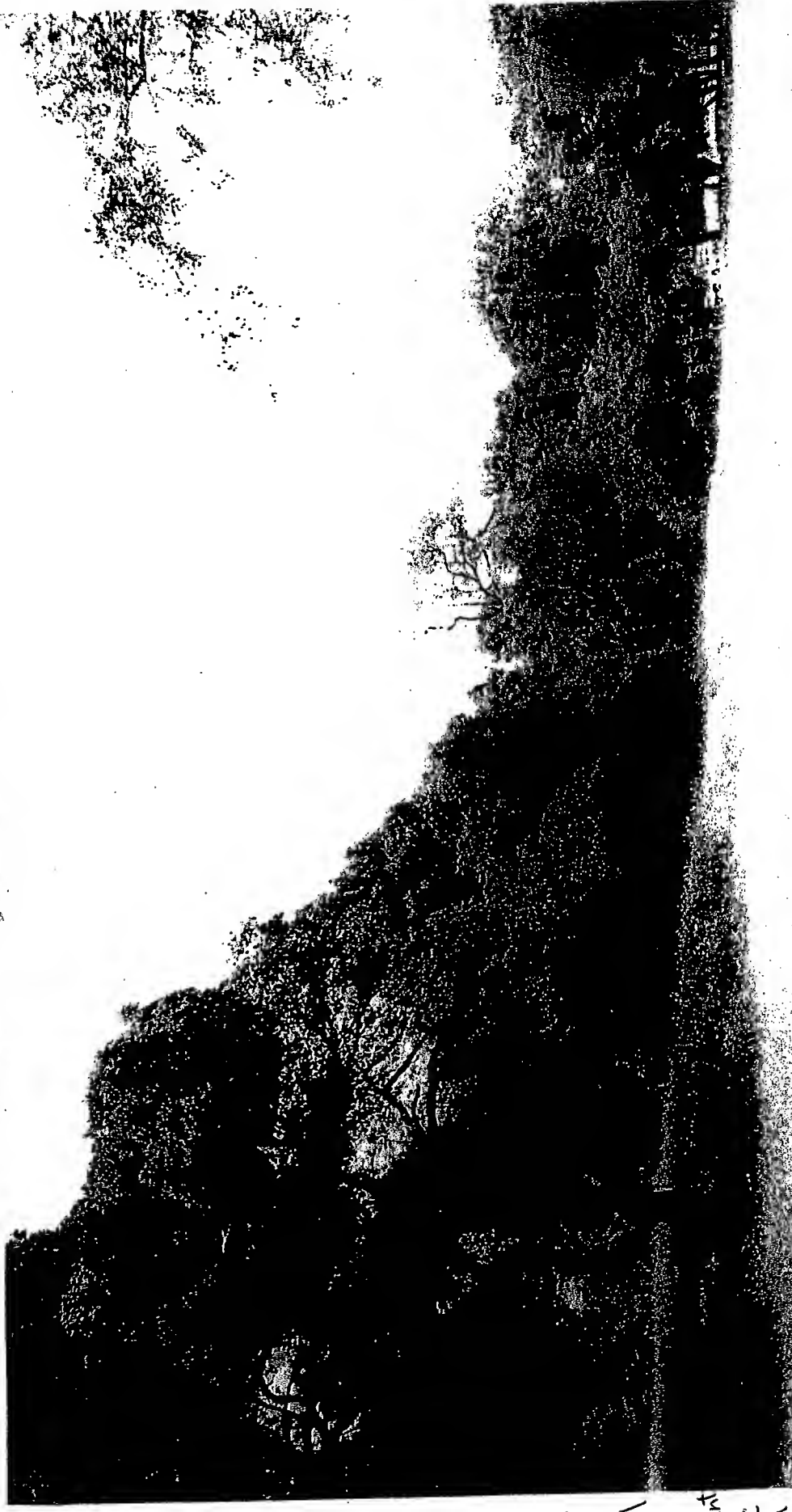
Kathleen Madgett
779 High Street
Sebastopol CA 95472

close up of wildflower bloom in rippled - loess area



h. Mammot M

Proposed dog park site



← Main
picn
area

acent
picnic
area (adjacent
picnic
Area

Dated 00/00/00

by [signature] et al.

459 Ragle Road
Sebastopol, CA 95472
(707) 829-8718 - home

Michelle Julene, Environmental Specialist
Sonoma County Regional Parks
2300 County Center Drive, Suite 120A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

October 1, 2003

Re: Ragle Dog Park Initial Study

Dear Ms. Julene:

I am writing to oppose the Regional Parks proposal to establish a dog park in Ragle Ranch Regional Park (Park). As a dog owner, normally I would be a strong advocate of a recreational and social setting for dogs. But as I will describe in this letter, based on the significant effects this dog park would have on the neighborhoods surrounding the dog park, I cannot be supportive of this project.

As you conduct your preliminary analysis of the potentially significant effects that the dog park may have on the environment, I doubt you will find that the proposed cyclone fence surrounding the dog park will impose a significant burden on the Park's natural environment. But California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines require you to analyze aesthetics, traffic, and public services in your Initial Study. I think you will find that these topics will require special attention, since the dog park will exacerbate an already significant problem.

Though the park seemingly has adequate parking now, it is underutilized. The reason that parking space in the Park is underutilized is that the parking restrictions on the streets in the community adjacent to the Park are rarely enforced. As a result, many people who use the Park park on side streets. While some Park users are courteous enough to use the crosswalk into the park at Covert Lane, most Park users jay walk across Ragle Road, and climb over the fence into the park. About 2 weeks ago, a young girl was struck by a car and probably fractured her hip or pelvis as she jaywalked across Ragle Road. When I have contacted the City of Sebastopol's police department to notify them of parking violations, cars speeding, pedestrians jaywalking, and cars parked in my driveway, their response has been that traffic enforcement has a higher priority downtown than in the peripheral areas of the city. Under these circumstances traffic, which would normally have benign impacts under a project like this, would have a greater impact than one would normally consider in an environmental document.

Park users who do not use parking facilities within the Park congest vehicle traffic in the surrounding community. In addition, these Park users deprive the Park of the revenues these users could generate, if they would pay for parking, or would purchase the reasonably priced annual parks pass. These revenues could be an additional means of funding the operations and maintenance of the dog park. To promote use of the parking facilities within the Park, the Friends of the Dog Park could supplement the parking fees or dog park users could be offered special discounted dog park passes to mitigate the impacts the dog park would impose on the adjacent neighborhoods.

With the addition of vehicles carrying dogs in the community, and with the City of Sebastopol's proven record of minimal enforcement of traffic and parking laws, dog waste will inadvertently be left on residential sidewalks. Any provisions within the Park to facilitate dog waste clean up would not be effective outside the park boundaries, unless poop bags were stocked and garbage cans were provided and maintained on city streets.

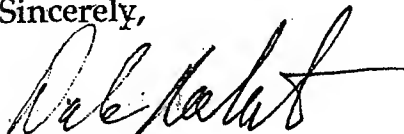
The City of Sebastopol's loose enforcement of traffic and parking laws and lack of attention in this community adjacent to the park is leading to the deterioration of this pleasant neighborhood. The dog park will only amplify a clearly significant effect on the aesthetics of the environment in this community.

This project could probably be declared as one having negligible impacts on the environment, if Regional Parks assumed laws in the vicinity of the Park were genuinely enforced. Normally environmental documents assume laws are enforced to a degree and would not require an analysis of impacts that would result due to the absence of enforcement. But since the self proclaimed "green" City of Sebastopol rarely exercises enforcement of traffic and parking restrictions in this area, this needs to be considered in the Initial Study.

Ironically, the success of the County Regional Park's dog park hinges largely on the City of Sebastopol's cooperation as a good neighbor. To make the project a success and to mitigate the impacts described herein, I urge the Regional Parks to recommend that the City of Sebastopol enforce laws for the 24 minute parking restriction, jaywalking, and parking in driveways. Laws in the books are only as effective as their enforcement, otherwise they are just suggestions.

Thank you for taking my comments into consideration

Sincerely,



Dale Roberts

Michelle Jullene
So Co Regional Parks

Re: Ragel dog park

I walk at the park twice a day 7 days a week with my dog- I
am in favor of site # 3- it makes the most sense- from all
points.

Michele Hanson
824-8307

Attention: Michelle Julene

To the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department:

We walk in Ragle Ranch Park, and we are dog owners. This park is a gem in our county. We have very few parks with easy access to natural areas. At Ragle, the young and old can enjoy oak trees in their natural meadow setting. In spring, the meadows are alive with lupine and poppies.

Sites 1 and 2 that are proposed for the fenced off-leash area are in the oak woodland meadows. A fence will break the expanse of beauty. Either fence would be visible from both ends of the meadow. A fence would also restrict the movement of wildlife. A variety of wildlife use this area around the clock. Natural habitat, with easy viewing, is very valuable.

Site 3 is small, but there is enough distance to throw a ball for a dog. Once it is flattened, it could be covered with bark or pea gravel. It wouldn't get so muddy or dusty.

Site 4 is in a natural habitat area, but it wouldn't be such an eye sore. We have mixed feelings about this site.

Site 5 has many points in it's favor. This area has no native cover. It is close to parking. It has been observed that people that use a dog park don't like to leash their dogs to an off-leash area. There would be plenty of play space for the dogs. It seems that native plants could shield the view of the area from the Peace Garden. If dog owners would agree not to use the off-leash area during ceremonies in the garden, it might work out.

We would be sad to see Site 6 developed. We feel cutting into the undeveloped native area should be avoided. It is sloped, and would be likely to erode when mowed.

Thank you for your attention and concern.

Ann Conger
Ann Conger

2002 Coffee Lane
Sebastopol, CA 95472

Kris Palo
Kris Palo

OCT. 6, 200

TO: Regional Parks Dept., att. Ms. Julie

FROM: Henry T. T. T.

RE: Development of Dog Park, Eagle Park.

As a visitor to Eagle Park on an almost daily basis for the last ten years I must protest the proposed plan to develop a "dog park" there. I use the park for the tranquility, spiritual refreshment, aesthetic inspiration and physical exercise it affords me. As an artist I can enjoy its visual beauty, unobstructed by fences or other man-made obstacles in a natural environment. This park has prolonged my life!

The park is an escape from the mid-town chaos of traffic, noise and frenetic pace. A "dog park" will be a jarring and disturbing presence into the peaceful areas of the park.

The area sites one and two considered for development most concerns me. The location is the heart of the park around which is the loop trail used by many of our citizens young, senior and yes people walking their dogs.

The beauty and peaceful oak meadow there would be forever altered with a dog park enclosed by a chain fence. The erosion of the tender grasses and other flora in the meadow, would not survive the churning up of the soil no matter what protective layers are used. Dust and mud would be the result.

One other point to be made is that the park offers -

a wonderful balance of activity in the eastern areas of the park: Soccer, baseball, softball fields, Tennis, Volleyball and picnic areas. The counter balance is in the western areas of nature's Open Space. Do not build a dog park! You would take away from others and myself a resource of peace, quiet and sanity.

Very truly yours

Henry Violin



Mr. Henry Violin
7777 Bodega Ave. Apt. D7
Sebastopol, CA 95472-3557

RECEIVED

OCT 7 - 2003

REGIONAL PARKS DEPT
COUNTY OF SONOMA

October 4, 2003

Michelle Julene, Environmental Specialist
C/o Sonoma County Regional Parks Dept.
2300 County Center Drive, Suite 120a
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Subject: Proposed Dog Park at Ragle Ranch Park

Dear Ms. Julene,

We viewed all of the alternative sites at Ragle Ranch Park with the group walk-through on October 25 and believe that nearly all of the alternative sites would have negative impacts on the environment and other users of the park. Only Alternative #3 near the tennis courts provides an easily accessible, flat site, with no major environmental problems. Listed below are the negative impacts that should be examined for each site.

Alternative #1 and Alternative #4

- Potential erosion problems due to significant slope of the site area.
- Loss of an accessible wildlife meadow area to seniors, children, and other users who cannot access the more remote park paths.
- Loss of an accessible wildlife meadow area to all users during the winter months when the wetland paths are flooded.
- Negative environmental impact to birds, wildlife, and butterflies in the site area.
- Fencing would detract from the aesthetic views to people walking on nearby paths and in the oak woodland areas around the site.

Alternative #6

This site shares all of the negative impacts listed for Alternative #1 and #4. In addition, the site is a more remote field that is frequented by sensitive wildlife including hawks who hunt for prey in the field. The site's location above Atascadero Creek also poses potential erosion and pollution that could negatively harm the wetland and riparian areas around the creek.

Alternative #2



- Loss of an accessible wildlife meadow area to seniors, children, and other users who cannot access the more remote park paths.
- Loss of an accessible wildlife meadow area to all users during the winter months when the wetland paths are flooded.
- Negative environmental impact to birds, wildlife, and butterflies in the site area.
- Fencing would detract from the aesthetic views to people using the picnic area or walking in the meadow areas around the site.
- Access to this location would result in more dogs walking through the picnic area which would disturb people in that area. The proximity of children is an additional concern.
- Recreation of people using the picnic area would be restricted by dog park fencing.
- Noise from the dog park would affect people using the adjacent picnic area.

Alternative #5

- Negative environmental impact to birds, wildlife, and butterflies in the site area.
- Potential pollution impact to the small riparian creek area that is downhill from the site.
- Noise from a dog park would not be appropriate to the adjacent Peace Site.
- Fencing would detract from the aesthetic views to people looking west toward the wetlands area of the park and the neighboring hillsides. It would also detract from the views of the adjacent Peace Site.
- The site is located adjacent to the natural, wildlife area of the park and, like Alternative 6, would have a negative impact on hawks and other wildlife using the fields directly to the west.

In conclusion, we feel that there are major issues with all sites except **Alternative 3**. This site located next to tennis courts does not have the significant environmental, aesthetic, and negative impact on other park users. It has the advantage of being easily accessible from the parking lot and from the street. It would not have erosion problems or negative impacts to wildlife that would occur at many of the other sites.

Sincerely,

Chris Stover
Lorraine Bazan
1357 Ferguson Road
Sebastopol, CA 95472
707-829-8262

TO: Michelle Julene, Environmental Specialist
Sonoma County Regional Parks Dept.

10/7/03

FROM: Rhonda Mikolaitis
P.O. Box 2162
Sebastopol, CA. 95473
829-1529

Note: Copy of this written letter was
forwarded to you on 10/8/03

I would like to preface my comments on the proposed Ragle Dog Park by stating that I am a dog lover and that I fully support the development of a site in Sebastopol where dogs can socialize and play off leash: but NOT in Ragle Park. Of course, dogs and their owners already enjoy and can continue to enjoy being at Ragle Park along with everyone else.

Ragle is a small park when you consider the area that is really usable year-round. The lower, west section which you state comprises 115 acres of the total 155 acres is in fact too muddy 6-8 months of the year to walk. This leaves 40 acres for all to share and enjoy as a park. Parks are multi-use. Much of Ragle's old growth trees, scenic vistas, flat shaded areas for shelter from hot sun, fields of stunning wildflowers, and wildlife habitat are all located in the upper "developed" 40 acres. These areas "balance" the intensely used remainder.

multi-use area is already heavily used with sports fields, playground, etc. During peak usage, the parking lots are full, and the noise level is very high. The last open spaces where people can walk, sit or just be to enjoy the beauty, peace, and healing qualities of nature are all proposed as potential spaces to develop, fence off, and become exclusively used for dogs to play off leash. This is totally unfair. It is not only unfair to the people that come to the park to be in nature, it is in opposition to the stated purpose of a park: stewardship of the land, preservation of wildlife and open space.

Ragle Park is the only really substantial rural park in Sebastopol. People (like myself), come here daily to be in nature because they are renters and have little or no property of their own. I find it interesting that among the core group of people who insist on using Ragle for their dog park, have as much as 3 acres of land they own themselves! There are several viable options for a dog park outside of Ragle, yet the proponents of the Ragle site have shown little or no interest in thoroughly investigating these alternatives.

Meantime it is clear that Sebastopol residents want a dog park! Since the front page article and publicity about this, I have encountered at least 10 times more people with their dogs walking around at Ragle. People that I have never seen before: already relating Ragle to "dog park". Along with that, I have observed alot more dog excrement both on and off trails, cigarette butts, noise and trash that was never there before. I have been coming to Ragle almost daily without fail for the last 3 + years. This is just a sad indication of what will only increase if a dog park is put in: more cars, noise, people taking their dogs and leaving excrement on and off the hill... degradation of ecosystems already heavily impacted... I considered Ragle a healing sanctuary: where I come to restore myself in the solitude, peace, and beauty and (at this point semi-quiet) of nature. (I'm sure it is so for many people that come here regularly.) Taking into account the huge swath of the beautiful hill that was

paved and developed for the Veteran's Memorial, I can't imagine developing one more inch of what little open space and undeveloped land there is. (Again, that is accessible and usable year-round.)

I will end this by saying that if there has to be a site chosen the ONLY one that would be suitable because it is already a developed area and would not destroy habitat or scenic vistas is site #3 between the tennis courts and the softball diamond. However, my overall strong opinion is that another site outside of Ragle should be chosen. Please, let us leave the few open undeveloped areas left in Ragle park for all to enjoy. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rhonda Mikolaitis

Rhonda Mikolaitis

Enclosure : ~~7~~ pictures of sites with comments on back
(Seven)

10/8/03

A note from
Rhonda Mikolaitis

Dear Michelle + whom it may
concern: I have enclosed
these pictures to show what
these "proposed areas" look like
in other seasons.

I hope this is taken into
account. For instance Sites
1 & 2 look horrible + degraded
now from the trampling (Thank
God only once / year) from the
Apple Fair. Miraculously though,
the wild flowers come back - probably
because the Fair is
held so late
Season + the
bare roots, etc
established.



Thanks for your consideration. Rhonda

Photos from Rhonda Mikolaitis



"Beauty, shade, Serenity on Sites 1 & 2 – gone?"



"Who will be able to enjoy these beautiful shady oaks if a fenced off area is put in for dogs?? Or the beautiful vistas in peace and quiet from above?"



Site #5

"Most beautiful field of wildflowers next to Peace Garden would be gone forever."



"This is the sensitive & beautiful ecology of the land just a little below and south of Site #6. People & dogs would not only decimate the land & wildflowers but obscure the stunning sunset view from the area directly above it."



Site #1 for
picnic site.

Who would want
to picnic here
if a dog park
put below

(except dog
owner + the
dogs??)



Site #5 next to
Peace Garden

followed by
view of it from the
Peace Garden.

How contradictory to
put ^{the} noisy, ~~dog~~ crowd
hectic activity of a
dog park next to it -
in front of a National
Peace Site!

Enclosure to Dog Ash Comments Submitted by Kharma Miko
10/8/03

(7 pictures total)
4 separate ones plus
these copies)

Comment on Site # 4: I have enjoyed the very unique wildflowers that grow in this area near the dirt path. I have not seen them anywhere else in the park. (Perhaps the person who leads the spring wildflower walk knows what they are) Besides that, there are rare + beautiful native grasses in this area.

To- Michele Julene and Philip Sales, Sonoma Country Regional Parks
Justin Witt, Breljie and Race

From- Jo Bentz, 9990 Graton Road, Sebastopol

Date- October 7, 2003

Subject: Comments on the Notice of Preparation for the proposed Ragle Ranch dog park

The following comments and recommendations (pages 1 through 5) refer to the NOP and should be addressed by Regional Parks prior to the preparation of the Initial Study.

Request to Allow Consideration of Additional Alternative Sites-

CEQA requires that the lead agency for a project "must consider a reasonable range of alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project." Project alternatives which should be considered are on-site alternatives and off-site alternatives. According to CEQA law, alternatives should "offer substantial environmental advantages over the project proposal" and the purpose of analyzing alternatives is to "reduce or avoid significant environmental harm."

Regional Parks together with Friends of the Dog Park have chosen six alternative sites within Ragle Ranch Park as "alternatives." Five of the six alternative sites, 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6, proposed by Regional Parks and Friends of the Dog Park have very similar negative environmental impacts. These five sites are located in naturalized oak woodland or grassland areas of the park which are currently used for passive recreation. Although site 3 has far less negative environmental impacts because it is flat and located in the already developed, active use area, this site was called "too small" by dog park proponents during the scoping session and does not appear to be supported by their group.

The question I have for Regional Parks is if they believe that they have offered an adequate range of alternatives that would lead to reduced or mitigatable impacts or have you just selected a bunch of sites which are considered to be acceptable by Friends of the Dog Park? I believe that offering many sites with equal impacts is not the same as offering a range of alternative sites, including off-site areas, which will result in the selection of the best permanent site with the least negative impacts.

For this reason, I am asking the following:

- ◆ Regional Parks to allow the public during the NOP to suggest additional alternative sites for consideration in the Initial Study, including sites outside of Ragle Park.
- ◆ I am requesting that Friends of the Dog Park and other members of the public make an effort to look for sites outside of Ragle Ranch Park that could serve their needs.
- ◆ I would recommend Regional Parks present additional alternative sites within Ragle Ranch Park which have less negative impacts, such as a flat site in the active part of the park which could be irrigated and turfed.

I believe it is well worth the additional effort to find the best site for the dog park than to continue to have unresolvable conflict over sites which all have similar negative impacts.

Request for Interested Parties Meeting Prior to Preparation of the Initial Study-

The scoping session was extremely valuable because it introduced members of the public to the environmental process and gave everyone a chance to look at the Alternative sites presented in the NOP. However, because the session was held outdoors, it was often difficult to hear comments. For many of us, this was the first time we observed the alternative sites, and therefore public comment was somewhat premature. The scoping session felt rushed because there were many comments and it started getting cold and dark. Personally, I found it difficult to concentrate on the issues at hand with the presence of a large group of people and of the need to handle dogs in the crowd. For these reasons, I am requesting that Regional Parks allow for another meeting before the preparation of the Initial Study to be conducted indoors, possibly with the use of a mediator to help keep comments focused and on task. Now that everyone is clear about the environmental review process, I think another meeting would be greatly beneficial to help both sides work toward a consensus.

Cumulative Losses and Setting Precedence-

Many people use the park and dogs are currently allowed on leash. The dog park will serve a narrow portion of the community but will impact a large segment of regular park users.

The cumulative environmental impacts of the proposed dog park need to be evaluated in the Initial Study. The cumulative impacts include loss of public Open Space, loss of passive recreational use in the upper park for the elderly, disabled and public not able to access the dirt trails of the lower park, impacts to scenic views and visual loss, noise disturbance, loss of wildflower meadows, and loss of important wildlife habitat.

A dog park at Ragle Ranch is a highly controversial proposal. There are many of us who cherish Ragle Ranch Park as a jewel in the Regional Parks system and are satisfied that, to this point, Regional Parks has managed to preserve the scenic beauty, wildlife habitat and Open Space by restricting active development to the soccer fields and the areas located near Ragle Road. To allow the dog park to be sited in the oak woodland portion of the park will set precedence for other special interest groups for active use of these areas. This will ultimately lead to a cumulative loss of these of areas in the upper park which currently provide scenic beauty, natural resources and quiet, passive recreational uses, especially for persons utilizing wheelchairs, the elderly, and mothers with strollers and small children who are unable to access the trails of the lower park.

Dust, Mud and Potential Storm Water Impacts-Request for Irrigated Turf Alternative

Except for alternative 3, there are no alternative sites offered with irrigated turf, an alternative which was repeatedly asked for during the scoping session by people from both sides of the issue, including Friends of the Dog Park members and member of the public opposed to the dog park at Ragle Ranch Park. If a dog park is sited and fenced in a natural grassland area on the easily erodable and friable "Gold Ridge " soils, it is highly likely that there will be nuisance problems such as dust in the summer and creation of muddy areas during the rainy season.

During the scoping session, it was obvious to everyone in attendance, including staff from Regional Parks, that there is a potential for major problems of siting the dog park on fragile grasslands with seasonal wet/dry soils. With an unturfed dog park sited in a naturalized, oak woodland setting, there is the potential for storm water impacts and the potential for severe problems due to erosion. This problem would be exacerbated by a sloped site which would increase the chances of erosion and potentially result in severe environmental degradation. Add to these impacts the potential for storm water laden with sediment, urine and the residue of feces to discharge to seasonal wetlands, creeks or low lying swales (alternatives 1,2,4,5 and 6).

Does this mean that within a year, or prior to construction, that the site chosen for the dog park will have to be irrigated and turfed, even sites near oaks and natural dry grassland savanna which will not tolerate irrigation? The contingency and mitigation plans for dealing with a soil erosion problem need to be clearly stated at the outset of the project and addressed in the Initial Study. What will Friends of the Dog Park do to prevent dust, mud and erosion from occurring in the trampled areas in the fenced dog park? Will Regional Parks allow irrigation of a site in the oak woodland and dry grassland setting? How will irrigation of these natural areas impact the dry grassland, oak trees and other native vegetation, wildlife and scenic view?

Request for Consensus Process-

Up to this point, there has been limited solicitation of comments or recommendations from those of us who have concerns about the proposed dog park. However, it was stated at the beginning of the scoping session and is clear from the "Project Background" section of the NOP that Regional Parks has been actively working with Friends of the Dog Park members on this proposal for quite a while, even supporting the project by providing funding of the Initial Study. Because of the high visibility and controversial nature of the dog park at Ragle Ranch, I recommend that Regional Parks work with representatives from both sides of the issue to form a consensus. This could be done with several meetings to focus on resolving issues and conflicts with a few individuals representing both sides.

For example, in Graton a group of individuals who are proposing to build a day labor hall are currently working with members of the community who originally opposed their proposal to work out a solution that is based on consensus, not conflict. Instead of

pushing through a bad project, why not allow for both sides to be represented in a setting where open discussion can occur?

There were many people who had negative comments and concerns about the dog park expressed during the scoping session. With the exception of site # 3, a site that is not supported by Friends of the Dog Park, all the other sites are very similar in negative environmental impact and only differ in size. This leaves people who are concerned with the siting of the dog park in Ragle Ranch with a choice between "bad" and "worse." However, I feel confident if Regional Parks allows for some meetings and open communication between the two groups, there would be an opportunity for a selection of a site that would allow a choice between "acceptable" and "better."

Conflict with the Master Plan and Amendment-

The Master Plan is a guide that directs the management of Ragle Ranch Park based on goals and policies established by the Board of Supervisors and Regional Parks. It makes good planning sense and allows for good management of natural resources by Regional Parks to site the dog park in an area with the least amount of impacts in an area already designated for active use in the Master Plan and Amendment. Regional Parks staff have indicated that the entire upper park is considered active. However, the Master Plan states that the C1 oak woodland areas adjacent and west of the 1993 designated active area is for passive recreational use. The 1993 Amendment allowed for "the Oak Woodland and Meadows along Ragle Road to be developed to meet active and passive recreational needs..." but did not allow for the oak woodlands away from Ragle Road to be developed.

I found it disturbing that during the scoping session Philip Sales said that the Master Plan would be amended to accommodate the dog park. It is bad policy for Regional Parks to suggest an amendment to the Master Plan before a site is even selected. Instead Regional Parks should be trying very hard to site the dog park in an area that would not conflict with the Master Plan for Ragle Ranch Park.

Request for Preparation of Draft Initial Study-

I would recommend that the Initial Study be released initially in draft form to allow the public and regulatory agencies a chance to make certain that all comments are adequately addressed. Releasing the draft of the Initial Study for review prior to the preparation of a final version will save everyone's valuable time and effort and make for a well-prepared document.

No Action Alternative-Siting the Dog Park Outside of Ragle Ranch Park

Please include "no action" as one of the alternatives in the Initial Study. Also, please include a history in the Initial Study on the efforts by Friends of the Dog Park and Regional Parks to find an appropriate location for the dog park outside of Ragle Ranch Park.

It was mentioned during the scoping session that finding a site for the dog park outside of Ragle Ranch Park was not within the jurisdiction of Regional Parks or within the scope of this project. However, the CEQA process requires "a public agency to implement feasible mitigation measures **or feasible alternatives** to reduce or avoid significant environmental consequences ... before the agency approves or carries out a project." If no one has looked for an appropriate site outside of Ragle Ranch Park, how do we know if there are not any feasible alternatives available which would greatly reduce the negative environmental impacts of a dog park sited in Ragle Ranch Park?

Recalculate Measurement of Site 3-

Please remeasure and recalculate the area of alternative 3 for the Initial Study.

Wildflower Meadows-

Wildflower meadows are likely to be destroyed by the creation of the dog park at sites 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6. In order to accurately document and assess the impact to the wildflower meadows for each of the six alternatives, I request that photographs, descriptions and measurements be taken at each alternative site in the spring of 2004.

How will Regional Parks mitigate for the destruction of wildflower meadows? In a letter dated July 1, 1993 Philip Sales responded to a citizen upset about the loss of a beautiful lupine meadow to the new parking lot, by suggesting that lupine seeds be collected and distributed "around the perimeter of the peace garden" and "in the dry sunny areas around the oaks." Ten years later, the areas he suggested for reseeding are the very areas now being evaluated for the dog park! The dog park will result in further loss of wildflower meadows in the park.

When will the cumulative loss of wildflowers in the park be recognized and addressed by Regional Parks? The wildflower meadows are a benefit to all park users and as such should be a protected resource. Was the reseeding of lupine in the park as described in Philip Sales 1993 letter ever done? What long-range plan does Regional Parks have to protect and restore wildflower meadows for future generations of park users? What type of mitigation would be required for the loss of another wildflower meadow due to the dog park?

Management Issues-

How often will the dog park be mowed? Will the mowing occur more or less often than the surrounding open space? Will the dog park be closed for part of the year to allow grasses to reseed and grow? If grasses do not regenerate within the fenced area of the dog park during the dormant months, what is the contingency plan for reseeding of grasses and preventing damage to soils? An irrigated turfed alternative on flat ground is the best long-term solution to these questions.

Comments on the Initial Study

The following comments are specific to the six alternative sites presented in the NOP and these comments need to be addressed in the Initial Study-

Alternative 1

Many people who regularly use Ragle Ranch Park don't like alternative 1 because it is too big and encompasses one of the most beautiful vistas in the upper park along the walking trail. This site has by far the most negative environmental impacts of any of the alternatives and some of these impacts are listed below-

Aesthetics- By erecting approximately 734 feet plus of fencing in a beautiful, scenic, grassland/oak woodland setting would result in significant adverse impacts to the scenic vista and degrade the visual character or quality of the site. There is no way to adequately mitigate this impact either with plantings along the fenceline or by selecting a different color of fencing material. The impact to the visual is significant and unmitigatable. The primary objective as stated in page 10 of the Master Plan for alternative site 1 (and for all other sites located in the in the C1 oak woodland designation) is to "provide optimal park user experience in terms of visual and recreation quality." Fencing of the dog park is in direct conflict with this stated use.

Mandatory Findings of Significance-Cumulative impacts must be considered here especially in the light of past projects (soccer fields, tennis courts and parking lots) and probable future projects that will contribute to further impacts to the oak woodland area. The dog park has the ability to potentially degrade the quality of the environment and reduce the number of species in the oak woodland area.

Once the oak woodland area is declared available for active use, there will be a net cumulative loss of scenic vista and passive recreational use in the upper park for all users, but the population of users most negatively affected will be those people not able to access the lower trails because of disability or other physical limitations. Thus, the dog park at this location has an adverse affect on human beings who use this portion of the park for quiet passive recreation.

Hydrology, Water Quality, Geology and Soils- This site is too steeply sloped to avoid the potential for stormwater discharges which would contain urine, residual feces and sediment. A swaled or boggy area is located below this site (to the west) and could receive sediment and nutrient laden storm water discharges. As a mitigation to avoid potentially significant erosion and storm water discharge issues, alternative 1 should be reduced in size or eliminated from the selection of alternatives.

Siting of the dog park at this location could result, over time, in potential significant impacts due to serious erosion and loss of top soil. This is because the fragile and unprotected soils could not withstand the constant trampling and digging by numerous dogs. The Master Plan, page 10, states that uses in this area should avoid "trampling." The picture in the Master Plan on page 9 shows a "formal pathway to reduce impact to understory." Yet, if the dog park is placed at this site, there will be repeated trampling of

fragile soils on a sloped hillside which could lead to significant degradation of soils and grasses.

Dog supporters say a bigger site will spread out and lessen the trampling impact. However, I argue that the larger the area, the greater the area that will ultimately be damaged because of repeated trampling and digging by a steady stream of dogs using the park.

Noise and Air Quality- The project would result in an increase in noise due to barking dogs and increased human activity in an area that is currently used for walking and quiet, passive recreation. There is no way to mitigate the noise impact. Also, there is the potential for a dust nuisance due to the repeated trampling of the fragile, dry soils during the summer and fall.

Biological Significance- Although special status species have not been identified in alternative 1, there are significant negative biological impacts that need to be considered at this site. Because Ragle Ranch Park is part of the public domain, the public deserves to know what natural resources it is losing in the creation of a dog park in an open space oak woodland/meadow. At this site, loss of a beautiful meadow of lupines must be considered as an impact because the wildflowers are part of the public trust and would be destroyed by the dog park. A possible mitigation would be to reduce the size of the area of alternative 1 to allow the wildflower meadow to exist outside of the fencing. The northwest corner of alternative 1 should be eliminated from the boundary of the dog park to allow for protection of the wildflowers.

Site 1 is described as an ecotone in the 1982 Master Plan. According to the Ragle Ranch Master Plan, the ecotone provides extremely important wildlife habitat and forage areas for bird species, small mammals and deer. Alternative 1 is particularly valuable wildlife habitat since the large open meadow and sloped grassland is used heavily as a feeding ground for birds of prey (hawks and owls) and the large oaks and firs are used as roosting sites for hunting. This site is a major forging area for deer and other wildlife, including acorn woodpeckers and squirrels, that feed on the acorns dropped from the large oaks which ring the grassland. The creation of a dog park at this location will introduce the smell and noise of dogs and the permanent fence will create a visual and physical barrier to wildlife. The result will be a cumulative loss of wildlife habitat and resultant displacement and loss of species currently supported in the upper park. This impact is significant and not mitigatable.

I have heard dog park supporters say that the wildlife can just move on down the hill into the "wild" area. This is a common misconception by the public, that wildlife can just move to another location. Loss of habitat results in the reduction or loss of number of individuals and species in a given area. Again, this is a public trust issue since Ragle Ranch Park provides wildlife habitat for a diverse range of species (not necessarily endangered, but certainly well appreciated by the public). One of the important functions of Ragle Ranch Park is that it is a wildlife island within an area of relatively dense urban

development. One of the primary goals stated on page 1 of the 1982 Master Plan is to preserve and enhance the open space and wildlife habitat values of the land.

Land Use and Recreation-The use of this site as active recreation is in conflict with the current recreational use of this site to provide passive recreation and scenic view. The Master Plan specifically states on Page 10 that one of the primary objectives in the existing C1 oak and fir woodland areas is to "provide optimal park user experience in terms of visual and recreational quality within the heavily-used picnic areas." Changing the stated objectives and goals of the Master Plan to accommodate the dog park is bad park management, bad land use policy and bad public policy.

Picnic Grounds-There are two picnic sites near alternative 1. The noise and smell of the dog park will negatively impact users at the two picnic grounds near this site.

Recommendation- Because of the many negative environmental impacts noted above, alternative 1 should not be selected as the site of the dog park. If dog park supporters are able to throw site 3 out because "it is too small", we should be able to throw site 1 out because it is too big, too beautiful and too rich in natural resources to use as a dog park.

Alternative 2

Alternative 2 has all the same negative environmental impacts as alternative 1; visual, noise, dust, loss of passive use, potential wildflower impacts, wildlife impacts and conflict with the Master Plan. Alternative 2 is not as steeply sloped as alternative 1. I do not know the wildflower impact at this site and will not know until a wildflower survey can be performed in Spring 2004, which I recommend be done for all sites prior to their consideration for development (see page 5 of this document). Alternative 2 appears to occupy a drainage basin at the base of the oak woodland area. Do we really want to site a dog park over an existing drainage basin which may function as a hydrologic recharge area?

The next largest consideration at this site is that it is next to a group picnic area and the fencing, noise and smell of dog would be very disruptive to people using the picnic area. This site would also require a trail be developed for access and this is an additional impact that needs to be considered.

I have held parties for my kids at the group picnic area and I have used this area as a place for pirate hunts and Easter egg hunts. Because alternative 2 is adjacent to the group picnic area, this site gets a lot of use by people having parties in the picnic area.

Recommendation- Because this site has all the same impacts as those listed for alternative 1, in addition to the fact that this site is very close to the group picnic area, I would not recommend this alternative for use as a dog park.

Alternative 3

This site is located in the active use area of the park near Ragle Road between the tennis courts and the Little League Baseball field. This site is in an area of noise and fencing, so

the visual, aesthetic and noise impacts are negligible. The active use of a dog park at this site fits in comfortably with adjacent uses. Use of this site for active recreation conforms with the current Master Plan and would not require an amendment. Most importantly, this site is flat (after removal of an existing dirt pile and cement pathway) and could be easily turfed and irrigated, thus eliminating dust, mud, storm water and erosion impacts. This site is not in a wildlife area or in an area used for quiet passive recreation.

The acreage for this site needs to be recalculated, as it is probably larger than 0.1 acre, especially if the calculations include the area on both sides of the existing cement pathway. Although the width of this site is narrower than other alternatives, the length of the site is similar to other alternatives (1 and 2) and would allow for a dog to run along its length for a good distance.

Recommendation: Because this site is in the active use area of the park and has less than significant to no impacts, I consider this alternative to be the best one presented in the NOP for the dog park.

Alternative 4

Alternative 4 is in the oak woodland area of the park and therefore has all the same impacts as alternatives 1 and 2; visual and aesthetics, noise and air quality, potential wildflower impacts, wildlife impacts, impacts to passive use park users and conflict with the Master Plan. Alternative 4 differs from alternatives 1 and 2 only because it is not located near a picnic area.

Alternative 4 is more steeply sloped than alternatives 1 and 2, and this makes the potential for significant erosion and storm water discharges an even greater concern at this site. According to frequent users of the park, the western portion of this site is a low area or bog which is very wet in the winter. Because of the wet area and steep slope, this site could result in a significant mud problem for dog park users in the winter.

The extent of spring wildflowers at this site is not known and would require a survey in the Spring of 2004.

Recommendation- Because of the steep slope and potential significant impacts as a result of stormwater, erosion and mud, I would not recommend this alternative for the dog park.

Alternative 5

Alternative 5 has some pluses and minuses. The pluses are that the site has good access near the parking lot, is relatively flat, is in the developed portion of the park and is not located along a passive use walking trail. The site is not in the oak woodland, but it is an open grassland used by wildlife. During the scoping session, our group scared away several quail at this location. This site could be reduced in size and moved closer to the parking lot to allow a buffer of space between the site and the peace garden and drainage ditch. Potentially, this site could be lightly graded, irrigated and turfed. This would reduce a number of potential storm water, erosion and dust nuisance impacts. If the site

was reduced in size and bermed properly, storm water could be directed away from the drainage to the south.

The minus side is that the fencing, noise and dust will have an impact on the users of the peace garden. Also, it was pointed out during the scoping session that this site has many California poppies which would be destroyed by the dog park. Fencing would be an eyesore because this site is part of a bluff that has a beautiful view of the lower park.

An archeological site is located in the drainage south of the site. During the scoping session, a dog park supporter stated that the Friends of the Dog Park could not afford an archaeological survey. However, there would be no need for an archaeological survey because the dog park would not be located in the drainage.

Recommendation- Because this site is relatively flat and has no oak trees, it has the potential to be turfed and irrigated. When compared to other alternative sites in the oak woodland setting, this site has fewer impacts than alternatives 1, 2 and 4. I would recommend this site as a second choice after alternative 3 and only after we conduct a thorough search for additional, more appropriate sites both inside and outside of Ragle Ranch Park. (see page 1 of this document).

Alternative 6

This alternative is completely unacceptable. I would like to know who chose this site as an alternative and why Regional Parks allowed this site to be included as a reasonable alternative for the dog park.

The 1993 Amendment to the Master Plan clearly states "that approximately 115 acres in the back of the site (park), most of which lies in the floodplain of Atascadero Creek, should remain largely undeveloped, and unique features...protected and/or enhanced." Because of its location in the Atascadero Creek watershed within the protected "wild" and undeveloped area of the lower park, this alternative is simply not viable and should be removed from the selection process. This site is sloped and storm water would eventually end up in Atascadero Creek. Erosion would be a huge issue and irrigation is out of the question. I would recommend a complete biological survey of this site prior to its consideration for developed active use. Development of this site as a dog park would set a very bad precedence for allowed uses in the lower park. The riparian corridor and wetland areas of the lower park should remain as little impacted as possible from any type of development, and this includes protection of the sloped grasslands and upland areas above Atascadero Creek. The only activity which should occur in the lower area is passive recreation and protection and restoration of riparian and wildlife habitat.

Recommendation- No way, completely unacceptable as an alternative.

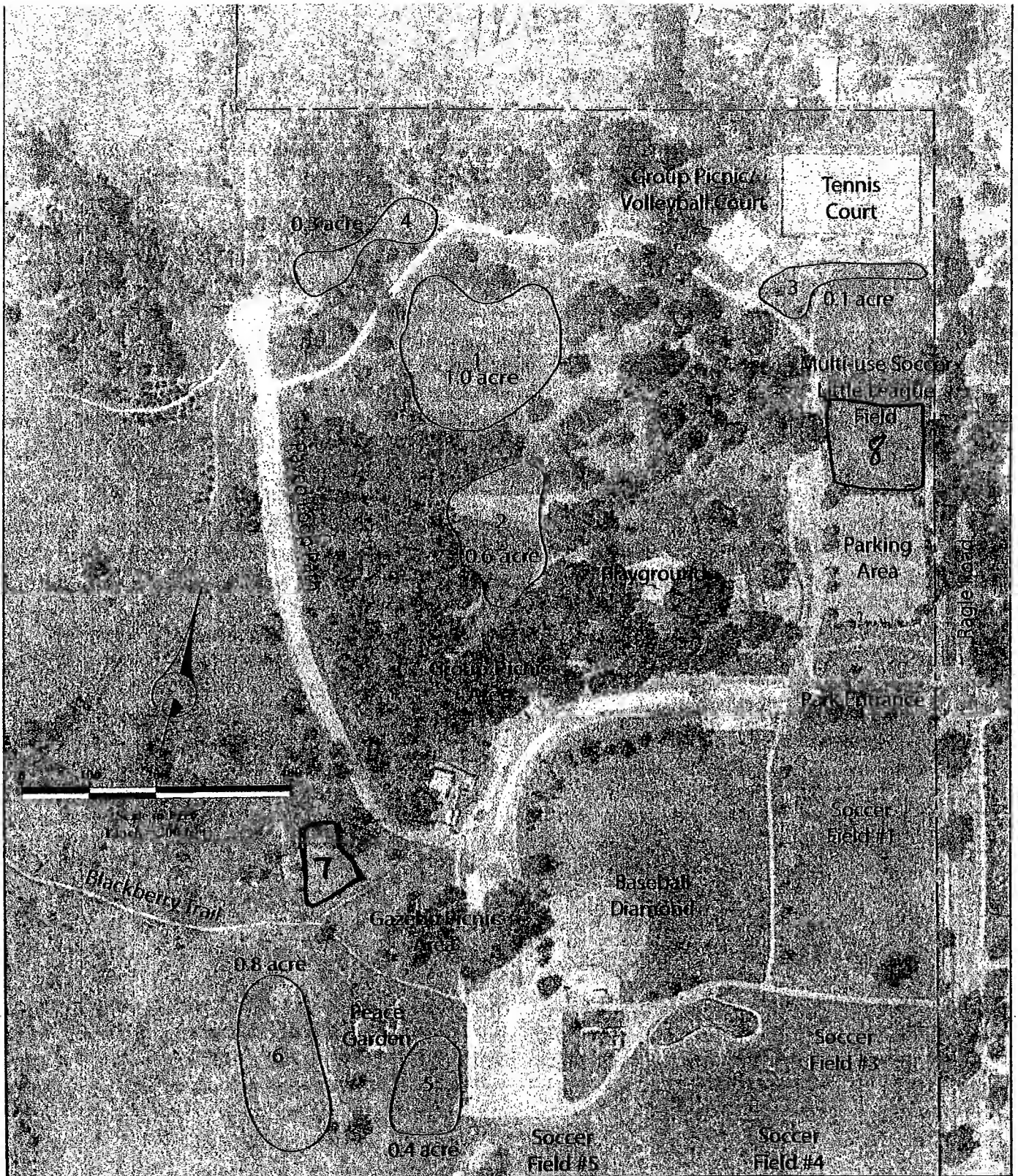
Additional Proposed Alternative Sites

I would like to propose two alternative sites for the dog park not currently in the NOP. Please see the attached map for the location of these sites-

- 1) Marked as site 7 on attached map.
- 2) Marked as site 8 on the attached map, the very underused Little League Soccer Field. Although Philip Sales said that mixed-use areas "don't work", I believe that the controversial nature of this proposal requires that Regional Parks take a second careful look to see if a flat irrigated turf site can be found.

cc: Lauren Hocker, NCRWQCB
Allan Buckman, California Department of Fish and Game
Mike Reilly, Sonoma County Supervisor

JB/Dog park impacts.doc



BRELJE & RACE
 CONSULTING CIVIL ENGINEERS
 5578 SKYLINE BLVD. SANTA ROSA, CA 95402 707/576-1337

Ragle Ranch Regional Park
 County of Sonoma, California

Date: September 2003
 Job #: 2660
 W/RP17260-2660-030501-NOP.31

Alternative Off-leash Dog Area Locations

Figure 2

October 8, 2003

To whom it may concern:

I am a Regional Parks pass holder and a user of Ragle Park for almost twenty years. I have concerns about locating a dog park in Ragle because it is the site of so many children's activities. If all dog owners were responsible owners, there wouldn't be a problem. Our animal shelters are full of abused and neglected dogs, including some that have been deliberately trained to be vicious. Such dogs off-leash, pose a danger to other users of the park and their pets. There isn't any way to prevent such irresponsible owners from using a dog park. Ragle Park is currently understaffed. There is a propensity for some dog owners not to follow the rules. This could lead to a child or elderly person being harmed. The county could be liable for damages if the rules are routinely not enforced.

I was unable to find any studies on the safety of dog parks. I challenge the county to provide a credible study to show that they are safe. I did however find a study from Journal of American Medical Assn. that shows an alarming increase in the number of dog attacks over a ten year period from 1986 to 1996. Almost 5 million people are bitten by dogs in the US every year, according to the Center for Disease Control. Unfortunately, children are 60% of the dog bite victims.

I think that it is negligent of the county to consider placing an unattended, off-leash dog park in the same park as groups of running and playing children. Many children don't have dogs at home and may unwittingly do things to provoke attack by ill-trained dogs. Many dogs haven't been socialized to children either. I think it isn't worth the risk.

When I have observed the Elisabeth Perrone Dog Park in the Sonoma Valley Regional Park, dog owners did not leash their pets and escort them to the dog park. They simply let their dogs out of the car to run through the picnic area to the dog park. This is not such a problem in this park because unlike Ragle Park, there aren't any regular children's activities held here.

I understand that when the people of Sea Ranch wanted to put in a dog park recently, they found out it would cost \$25,000 a year for liability insurance. These parks can't be so safe if it costs that much to insure them. If you do decide on a dog park for Ragle, The Friends of the Dog Park, should pay for liability insurance just as the sports teams do.

I have included some pages with dog bite and dog park information from dogbitelaw.com. This is an award winning web-site run by a prominent lawyer who specializes in dog laws. I have also included some information from dogexpert.com from an expert with several degrees in animal behavior. There is also information from Michael Bermant M.D., a board certified plastic surgeon who repairs dog injuries.

It only takes one negligent owner to cause a permanent injury to a child. Banning a dog from the dog park, after the fact, does nothing to help that child. It is impossible to tell ahead of time which dogs will bite. Should we really be putting our most vulnerable members of society at risk, for the sake of dog recreation?

Sincerely,



Clark Mitchel

7451 Huntley St. Sebastopol



Dog Bite Law

Dog Bite Statistics

There is a dog bite epidemic in the United States. Almost 2% of the population of the USA is bitten by dogs every year. There are 4.7 million victims annually. The most frequent victims are children, and they are almost always bitten by the family dog or a friend's dog. You will be surprised to read the statistics in this section.

- o The dog bite epidemic: a primer
- o The dogs most likely to bite
- o Children are the most frequent victims
- o The face is the most frequent target

This is a section of the web site *Dog Bite Law* (www.dogbitelaw.com)--the most comprehensive educational web site for dog bite victims, dog owners, parents, journalists and others interested in the dog bite epidemic. Click here to go to the *Dog Bite Law* home page.

he dog bite epidemic: a primer ↑

- **The number of dogs.** Approximately 35 percent of American households owned a dog in 1994, and the US dog population exceeded 52 million. (Wise JK, Yang JJ. Dog and cat ownership, 1991-1998. J Am Vet Med Assoc 1994;204:1166-7.)
- **The number of victims.** A survey by the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta ("CDC") concludes that dogs bite nearly 2% of the U.S. population -- more than 4.7 million people annually. (Sacks JJ, Kresnow M, Houston B. Dog bites: how big a problem? Injury Prev 1996;2:52-4.) Almost 800,000 bites per year -- one out of every 6 -- are serious enough to require medical attention. Dog bites send nearly 334,000 victims to hospital emergency departments per year (914 per day). (National Center for Health Statistics National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey for 1992-1994.) Bites to children represent more than 50 percent of the total number cases. Twenty-six percent of dog bites in children compared with 12 percent in adults require medical care. (Ibid.) Every year 2,851 letter carriers are bitten. (US Postal Service.) An American has a one in 50 chance of being bitten by a dog each-year. (Centers for Disease Control [CDC].)
- **The number of fatalities.** In the U.S. from 1979 to 1996, 304 people in the U.S. died from dog attacks, including 30 in California. The average number of deaths per year was 17. Most deaths occurred in children. (Centers for Disease Control, "Dog-Bite-Related Fatalities -- United States, 1995-1996," MMWR 46(21):463-467, 1997.) The chances that victim of a **fatal** dog attack will be a burglar are one in 177; the odds that it will be a child are 7 out of 10. However, fatalities are highly unusual. For every fatal dog bite in the United States, there are 230,000 bites that are not treated by a physician.
- **The financial impact of dog bites** . Dog attack victims in the U.S. suffer over \$1 billion in



Dog Bite Law

Dog Parks

The usual laws apply in dog parks where leashes are optional. In other words, a person bitten in a leash-optional park, or injured by a dog with "vicious propensities," has the same rights as a person bitten or injured outside the park. However, there are a few differences: in a leash-optional park, it will be more difficult for a victim to establish that the dog owner was negligent by not having the dog on a leash, and the dog owner will be able to present a defense based on assumption of the risk. There are ways to make dog parks and dog runs a bit safer, but there are no court cases setting minimum standards at this time.

- o Overview
- o Negligence liability
- o Suits against local governments
- o Assumption of the risk
- o Bites and injuries resulting from a dangerous propensity of the attacking dog
- o Guidelines for dog parks

Overview

Leash-optional dog parks are a great place to take your dog. There is no need for the dog owner to worry about joggers, kids on bikes, inattentive drivers, elderly people and the disabled. Like any recreational area, however, dog parks are not free of risks. People and dogs get injured in dog parks throughout the United States.

One of the most reported problems is that irresponsible dog owners bring unneutered male dogs into these parks, and then the dog fights begin, with people and dogs being bitten. Also, there are altercations between the responsible owners and the irresponsible ones.

There currently are no reported legal opinions about dog parks, but some conclusions are possible. People who suffer bodily injuries or injuries to their dogs have **most of** the usual rights in dog parks that they have outside such places. Basically, leash-optional dog parks merely are places where the city's leash laws do not apply. They are not, however, Wild West frontier towns where dogs can fight it out and attack people without fear of the Sheriff! Leash-optional parks are not zones of immunity for irresponsible dog owners and dangerous dogs.

Negligence liability

The dog bite epidemic: a primer ☐

- **The number of dogs.** Approximately 35 percent of American households owned a dog in 1994, and the US dog population exceeded 52 million. (Wise JK, Yang JJ. Dog and cat ownership, 1991-1998. J Am Vet Med Assoc 1994;204:1166-7.)
- **The number of victims.** A survey by the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta ("CDC") concludes that dogs bite nearly 2% of the U.S. population -- more than 4.7 million people annually. (Sacks JJ, Kresnow M, Houston B. Dog bites: how big a problem? Injury Prev 1996;2:52-4.) Almost 800,000 bites per year -- one out of every 6 -- are serious enough to require medical attention. Dog bites send nearly 334,000 victims to hospital emergency departments per year (914 per day). (National Center for Health Statistics National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey for 1992-1994.) Bites to children represent more than 50 percent of the total number cases. 26% of child-victims -- compared with 12% of the adults -- require medical care. (Ibid.) Every year 2,851 letter carriers are bitten. (US Postal Service.) An American has a one in 50 chance of being bitten by a dog each year. (CDC.)
- **The number of fatalities.** In the U.S. from 1979 to 1996, 304 people in the U.S. died from dog attacks, including 30 in California. The average number of deaths per year was 17. Most of the deceased were children. (Centers for Disease Control, "Dog-Bite-Related Fatalities -- United States, 1995-1996," MMWR 46(21):463-467, 1997.) The chances that the victim of a *fatal* dog attack will be a burglar are one in 177; the odds that it will be a child are 7 out of 10. However, fatalities are highly unusual. For every fatal dog bite in the United States, there are 230,000 bites that are not treated by a physician.
- **The financial impact of dog bites.** Dog attack victims in the U.S. suffer over \$1 billion in monetary losses every year. ("Take the bite out of man's best friend." *State Farm Times*, 1998;3(5):2.) That \$1 billion estimate might be low -- an article in the Journal of the American Medical Association reported that, in 1995, State Farm paid \$70 million on 11,000 claims and estimated that the total annual insurance cost for dog bites was about \$2 billion. (Voelker R. "Dog bites recognized as public health problem." JAMA 1997;277:278,280.) One in three homeowner insurance claims pertains to a dog bite. ("Take the bite out of man's best friend." *State Farm Times*, 1998;3(5):2.) The average insurance payout is \$12,000. (Ibid.)
- **Dog bites are on the rise:** Although the number of dogs in the United States increased by only 2% between 1986 and 1996, the number of dog bite injuries requiring medical treatment rose by 37%. (Weiss HB, Friedman DI, Coben JH. "Incidence of dog bite injuries treated in emergency departments." JAMA 1998;279:51-53.) - *Journal of American Med.*
- **The scene of attack is home or a familiar place.** The majority of dog attacks (61%) happen at home or in a familiar place.
- **Dogs bite family and friends.** The vast majority of biting dogs (77%) belong to the victim's family or a friend.

For more information:

- Medscape has a table showing the number of dog bite fatalities by state.
- Interested in extraordinary detail about the who, what, when and where of dog bites? Very informative and detailed injury data are available from the database of the Canadian Hospitals Injury Reporting and Prevention Program (CHIRPP), Health Canada.

average weight of a Pomeranian is about 4 pounds, and they are not thought of as a dangerous breed. Note, however, that they were bred to be watchdogs! The baby's uncle left the infant and the dog on a bed while the uncle prepared her bottle in the kitchen. Upon his return, the dog was mauling the baby, who died shortly afterwards. ("Baby Girl Killed by Family Dog," Los Angeles Times, Monday, October 9, 2000, Home Edition, Metro Section, Page B-5.)

In all fairness, therefore, it must be noted that:

- **Any** dog, treated harshly or trained to attack, may bite a person. **Any** dog can be turned into a dangerous dog. The owner most often is responsible -- not the breed, and not the dog.
- An irresponsible owner or dog handler might create a situation that places another person in danger by a dog, *without the dog itself being dangerous*, as in the case of the Pomeranian that killed the infant (see above).
- Any **individual** dog may be a good, loving pet, even though its breed is considered to be likely to bite. A responsible owner can win the love and respect of a dog, no matter its breed. One cannot look at an individual dog, recognize its breed, and then state whether or not it is going to attack.

* Children are the most frequent targets ↑

Studies of dog bite injuries have reported that:

- The median age of patients bitten was 15 years, with children, especially boys aged 5 to 9 years, having the highest incidence rate
- The odds that a bite victim will be a child are 3.2 to 1. (CDC.)
- Children seen in emergency departments were more likely than older persons to be bitten on the face, neck, and head. 77% of injuries to children under 10 years old are facial.
- Severe injuries occur almost exclusively in children less than 10 years of age.
- The majority of dog attacks (61%) happen at home or in a familiar place.
- The vast majority of biting dogs (77%) belong to the victim's family or a friend.
- When a child less than 4 years old is the victim, the family dog was the attacker half the time (47%), and the attack almost always happened in the family home (90%).

Here's how dog bites rank among other common causes of childhood emergency-room injuries:

Cause of injury	Emergency room incidents annually
Baseball/softball	404,364
Dog bites	333,687
Playground accidents	268,810
All-terrain vehicles, mopeds, etc	125,136
Volleyball	97,523
Inline skating	75,994



Dog Bite Prevention

Dog bites can cause much deformity. Learn several situations to lessen the chance of dog bite injuries by Dr. Michael Bermant, MD plastic & cosmetic surgery.

Michael Bermant, MD

Board Certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery

Reconstructive ■ Hand ■ Cosmetic ■ Congenital ■ Breast ■ Head & Neck ■ Skin Cancer ■ Microsurgery

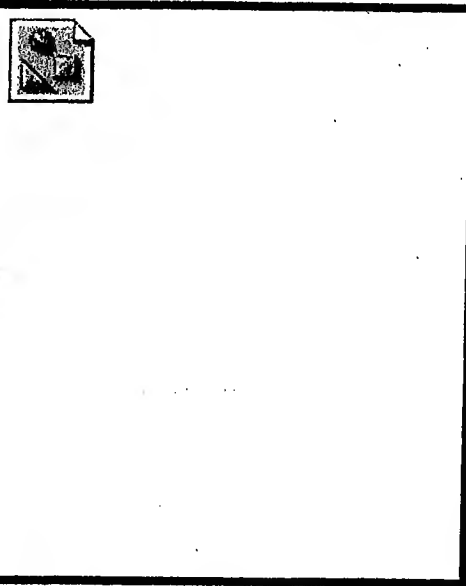
dog bite prevention

Dog bites result in approximately 44,000 facial injuries in US hospitals each year. This represents between 0.5% and 1.5% of all emergency room visits. Every 40 seconds, someone in the United States seeks medical attention for a dog bite. Male patients slightly outnumber females in most studies.

Unfortunately children comprise 60% of the dog

bite victims. Severe injuries occur almost exclusively in children less than 10 years of age. The face is the most frequent target (77% of all injuries). Mail carriers are an exception where 97% involve the lower extremities. We see an unusual number of dreadful injuries each spring. Severely injured patients stay an average of 4.2 days in the hospital. Dog bites cause an average of 18 deaths a year.

Almost \$165 million is spent treating dog bites in the United States for the estimated 800,000 dog bite related injuries requiring treatment each year. 70% of dog bites occur on the owner's property.



About Dr. Bermant



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Kid's view



Other Bulletin boards

- Dog bite questions / answers

In a leash-optional park, it will be more difficult for a victim to establish that the dog owner was negligent by not having the dog on a leash. Basically, "negligence" is the doing of something that was unreasonable, or the unreasonable failure to do something that should have been done. In a leash-optional dog park, the dog owner still must do what is reasonable, such as keep his or her dog on a leash if the dog is unruly, easily scared, not socialized, unneutered, has provoked fights with other dogs, or has any known dangerous propensity, such as the habit of jumping on people.

If the owner of such a dog fails to keep it on a leash in a leash-optional park, or allows it to cause injury to person or dog in a manner that could have been prevented, the victim should still prevail on a claim that the conduct of the dog owner was unreasonable, and therefore negligent.

To read more about negligence, go to The Dog Bite Law Adviser and, once there, click on "Negligence."

Suits against local governments

The victim of a personal injury or injury to the victim's dog probably will not prevail on a claim against the local government entity that established the dog park. Generally, there are immunities that protect government entities from many claims; if the entity believed that it was doing something beneficial for the community, it is hard to get around the immunity.

However, failure to enforce its own rules and regulations may result in governmental liability. Dog parks frequently are governed by special rules that are either posted or part of the local municipal code. If an irresponsible dog owner has a habit of breaking those rules, and the local animal control officers do nothing despite being informed, a person who sustains personal injuries or injuries to his or her dog may prevail against the municipality.

Assumption of the risk

Adults and mature children who voluntarily encounter a known risk are usually deemed to have consented to the injuries they receive as a result of that particular risk.

If you go to a no-leash dog park and you are injured by a dog, under circumstances **other than a bite** where the dog would not have injured you if it was leashed, then there is a very good argument that you assumed the risk. After all, you knew that leashes were optional at the park, but you went there anyway to take advantage of the same leash-optional law that resulted in your own injuries.

However, the assumption of risk doctrine will not be used against a responsible dog owner who goes to a dog park that is frequented by an irresponsible dog owner who fails to follow the rules of the dog park. The law will not penalize the very people whom the dog park was intended to benefit, by permitting the dog park to become a Wild West town where anything goes. For that reason, courts will not permit this doctrine to be used as a shield for unreasonable or unlawful conduct.

To read more about assumption of the risk, go to the Lawyers section of the Dog Bite Law home page, click on "Civil Liability for Dog Bites," and scroll down to the section on "Provocation and

Assumption of the Risk."

Bites and injuries resulting from a dangerous propensity of the attacking dog

In every state, the owner or possessor of a dog having a dangerous propensity (i.e., the propensity to jump on people or bite people) is strictly liable for injuries that result from the dog's dangerous propensity. So, if a dog owner knows that his dog likes to jump on people and knock them down, and if that happens in a leash-optional area, the dog owner will be liable under state law.

Also, most states have laws imposing strict liability on dog owners whose dogs actually bite someone, irrespective of whether the dog previously bit anyone. These laws still apply, even though the bite occurs in a dog recreation area where leashes are optional.

To find out how to investigate whether a dog has a dangerous propensity, go to The Dog Bite Law Adviser and, once there, click on "*Investigation of Dog.*"

Guidelines for dog parks

If you are thinking about establishing a dog park or a dog run, consult with an attorney familiar with the area where the new facility will be. As a starting point, here are some guidelines that will promote safety and hopefully limit liability:

- There should be adequate fences that dogs cannot dig under or jump over
- There should be at least one gate that securely latches (consider using two gates, so that a dog that rushes through the first one cannot get past the second one)
- Visible signs should establish rules
- Users should be advised that they will be using the park at their own risk, including but not limited to the risk of being bitten, being knocked down, tripping, etc.
- The number of dogs per person must be limited
- The age of users must be limited
- Professional dog walkers should register (at least)
- No dog shall be left unattended by its owner
- No dogs allowed if previously adjudicated to be dangerous
- No dogs allowed that previously have bitten or injured a person or another animal
- Dogs to remain on leash at all times, coming to and from dog run
- All violations will be investigated and one of the possible penalties is revocation of privilege
- There will be an address for complaints, which will be reviewed in a timely manner
- There will be a board or other body that will make decisions regarding enforcement and application of penalties

Remember to see your local lawyer. The foregoing is intended only as a helpful guideline.

(fighters) were responsible for roughly 60 percent of the more than 300 fatal attacks that have occurred during the last 20 years.

Killer Instinct

Though rottweilers and pit bulls are involved in deadly attacks more often than other breeds, experts say it's impossible to tell a killer by breed alone. One of the best predictors of canine aggression is whether a dog has been neutered, or surgically stripped of its sex organs. Dogs that haven't been neutered experience hormonal surges that drive them to roam and fight. Hormones are chemical messengers that control body processes and behavior. Neither Bane nor Hera had been neutered.

Another factor that might have been involved in the Whipple attack was predatory aggression. Predators kill other animals for food or to defend their territory. Dogs have evolved from wild canines, and most wild canine predators kill in packs. Evidence from several hundred fatal dog attacks suggests that some domestic dogs will return to those savage instincts when they gather in a pack. "Frequently it's a small pack of two to five dogs that work as a group and down some prey--most often a child or small adult." Diane Whipple--who was just 1.6 meters (5 foot 3 inches) tall and weighed only 50 kilograms (110 pounds)--was bitten in the leg and dragged to the floor by one dog as the other dog attacked her throat.

Human Hazard

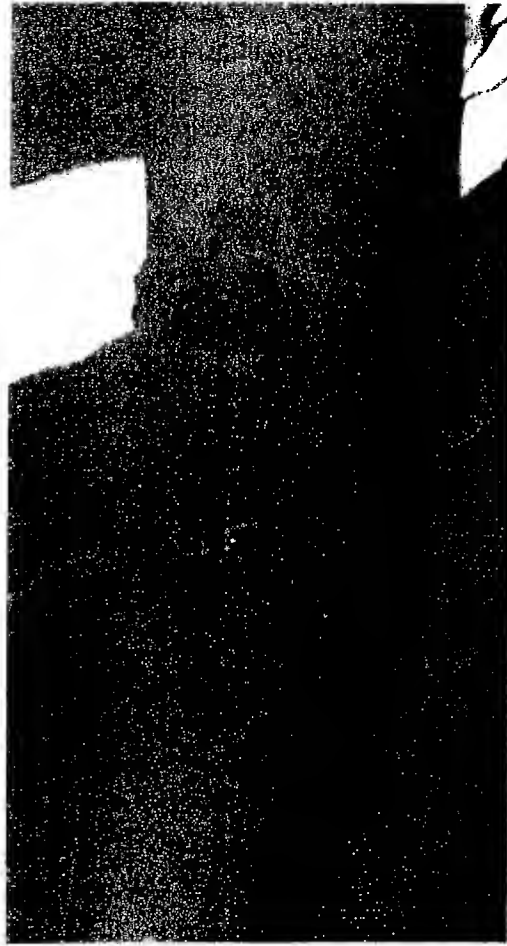
No matter how much the preceding factors influence dog behavior, most animal experts agree that humans are ultimately responsible for fatal dog attacks. "Genetics may load the gun," said Lockwood, "but it requires human action or irresponsibility to pull the trigger." A pet's behavior is partly determined by its upbringing, health, and training--all things for which the owner is responsible.

"In most cases of [fatal] dog bites, a person has encouraged or allowed a dog to become dangerous," said Lockwood. Such encouragement includes rough play, abuse, and praise when a dog growls at strangers. "In 25 years of investigating fatal dog attacks, I have seen practically every breed involved in at least one fatal attack," said Lockwood. "Owners have a responsibility to control what their dogs do."

[Back to top](#)

Dog Gone.(dogs that bite, accident statistics, United States)

Insight on the News, July 30, 2001



injuries to a ten year old boy in an attack
by a pit-bull

October 8, 2003

Dear Michelle,

I have been a user of Ragle Park for almost twenty years. The oak-fir-savanna area that the paved path surrounds is my favorite area of the park. I have enjoyed many family and school picnics there over the years. It is very special to be able to enjoy the sort of peaceful vista that is rapidly disappearing all over the county. The paved path provides year round access to exercise and enjoy nature at the same time. It also provides access for nature viewing to our less able citizens including parents with small children, the disabled, and many of our elderly citizens.

Locating a dog park anywhere along the paved path would destroy the beauty and peace that is currently available for all to enjoy, whether you have a dog or not. The noise, smell, and activities of large numbers of dogs running loose would frighten off wildlife that currently forage in these areas. All users of Ragle Park are able to enjoy the lupine and poppy (our state flower) bloom every spring. There is not such a display anywhere else in the park. Already a wildflower display, that my family enjoyed, was destroyed to create the Multi-use Soccer and Little League field.

As a veteran of many group picnics, I can attest to the fact that these areas are also used by older children as a safe place to explore nature on their own without being too far from adults. For many children, school picnics provide their only opportunity to catch a glimpse of the kinds of birds and animals that inhabit an oak woodland. It would be better to take advantage of this educational opportunity, by posting educational signs about the oak woodland community, educating students about the plants and animals they see. This would also be an ideal place for docent activities and demonstrations to educate the populace about the importance of the oak woodland community.

I would also like to point out that site number 4 is marshy in the wet season. There is a lot of sedge(juncas) growing in this area indicating it is a wetland. The bar-bell shape of the park would make it difficult to keep track of the dogs. The noise and the smell of an unirrigated dog park would destroy the peace and harmony that everyone can now enjoy when they walk along the path. I treasure the paved path as a safe place to enjoy nature and exercise, especially when the back area is flooded in the winter and spring.

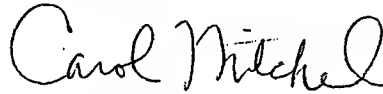
Sites 5 and 6 are too close to the Peace Garden where people go to enjoy peace and quiet. Now there is a lot of times, when there are no soccer or baseball games going on, it provides a quiet area for contemplation that is easily accessible to all. As an irrigated domestic garden, it provides a much different experience than the oak woodland/ savanna area does.

Site number 3 would pose the best site for a dog park. At the scoping meeting dog park proponents indicated they considered a chain link fenced area containing bark or gravel more beautiful than an open meadow with a spectacular wildflower bloom. It would only make sense to locate the dog park where they could enjoy the beauty of the chain-link fenced tennis courts and the chain-link softball backstop. In other words wouldn't it make sense to group all the chain-link appreciators together? If this is too small of a site for their use then perhaps they should look for sites outside of the Park. I have enclosed a picture of one possible site, owned by the city of Sebastopol. It is about 1 acre in size and has established turf on less fragile soil than any of the sites suggested at Ragle. Many dog owners prefer turf for a dog park. Regular

irrigation keeps down the smell from lots of dog urine. It has the shade of seven liquid amber trees. It is no more of a slope than the 1 acre site suggested for the central meadow at Ragle. No group currently uses this site. Ragle Park is not the only option for a dog park in this area of Sonoma County.

The ability to exercise and picnic in a peaceful natural area, that is accessible in all kinds of weather provides a tremendous psychological benefit for all Sonoma County Residents, regardless of their physical ability. These areas should be protected, as stated in the master plan for Ragle, for future generations to continue to enjoy. The psychological health of human beings should be considered ahead of that of domestic pets. Dog owners now have equal access to these areas. Giving them exclusive use of one of the natural areas of the park would spoil many of the current users' enjoyment of the park.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol Mitchel". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial 'C' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'l'.

Carol Mitchel
7451 Huntley St.
Sebastopol, CA

A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a long, low building, possibly a train car or industrial structure, situated in a field. The building is partially obscured by dark, silhouetted trees on the left. The foreground is a textured, grassy field. The image is rotated 90 degrees clockwise.

Alte vate dog park site owned by city of Sebastopol on Morrison St.

84

Proposed dog park site (



adjacent
- picnic
area

(paved
path)

October 8, 2003

Michelle Julene
Sonoma County Regional Parks Dept
2300 County Center Drive, Ste 120
Santa Rosa, California 95403

RE: Dog Park in Ragle Park

Dear Ms. Julene,

I attended the scoping session on September 25. Let me first say, that I am not opposed to dog parks. I work in Rincon Valley near the dog park in the Community park there. It is a great place for people and dogs to socialize. However, that Park is vastly different from Ragle. There is no real habitat for wild animals; it doesn't have beautiful old oaks and open meadows. And it is all turfed.

I think that a dog park in Ragle, especially in all but one of the proposed sites, would set the dangerous precedent of ignoring the Master Plan for the park. If special interests are allowed to carve up the park, the public who wants to enjoy the increasingly rare oak woodland habitat, are cheated. As apple orchards and other open areas around the park are being developed or turned into vineyards, there is less habitat for deer and other wild animals. Ragle is becoming an island for these creatures.

The only site that is acceptable to me would be #3 near the tennis courts, because it is turfed and away from the natural areas.. I realize that it probably too small. I hope that the County can come up with a site that is suited to this use.

Thanks for listening

Judith Rousseau
P.O. Box, 452
Graton, CA 95444

To: Sonoma County Regional Parks Dept
Re: Scoping session for off leash area

October 8, 2003

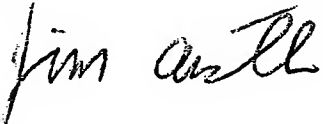
Please take these comments into consideration concerning the off leash area at Ragle Ranch.:

- The study should address the impact that is currently occurring in the wildland area due to the lack of a designated off leash site. This impact could be reduced by the creation of an off leash area.
- Alternate 1 should be studied extensively as it is the most popular and controversial site.
- Alternate 4 is another good site for an off leash area, as it is large enough and not as controversial as site 1.
- Alternate 2 is too close to the picnic and playground areas.
- Money and time should NOT be spent on any site as small as site 3. It simply is not large enough, and the impact on such a small area would be great.
- Alternate 5 is a known archeological site and money should NOT be spent studying this unless there are possible mitigations which would allow for a dog park.
- Alternate 6 lies outside the developed active use area and should NOT be considered.

The West County is without an off leash area, Ragle Ranch has been proposed to have such a site, and advocates have been working for 2 years or better on this possible off leash area. Ragle Ranch is a multi-use park and can accommodate the needs of west county dogs.

Sincerely,

Jim Castle



sonomanews.com

Monday, October 6, 2003

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Letter 3/5/02 - Dogs off leash are big problem

Editor, Index-Tribune:

I am writing out of concern for safety at Sonoma Valley Regional Park. The problem is off-leash dogs and unconcerned and/or ignorant pet owners. I personally observe these alarming situations all too frequently:

- Dogs off-leash pursuing and snapping at deer, horses, hikers and joggers, often while far away from their unconcerned owners.
- Dogs off-leash along the paved path accosting stroller-bound toddlers at eye-level.
- Anywhere from four to 10 off-leash dogs per day swimming and pooping in the lake, which is a water supply that needs to be kept clean, while unconcerned owners look on.
- Dogfights between uncontrolled dogs.
- Wheelchair-bound people having to defend themselves against uncontrolled dogs.
- Dogs off-leash that step right into the path of a bicycle rider or roller-skater, causing collision and injury.

Dog owners need to remember that even though their own dog is the cutest little doggy in the world, it's important to obey the laws so that a variety of users can enjoy the park safely. I hope that these concerns can be addressed before tragedy strikes some unsuspecting child, cyclist, hiker or jogger who is simply trying to enjoy the great outdoors.

Public safety should be "job one" for the park administration. Multiple signs that clearly advocate the leash law should be implemented and patrols for uncontrolled dogs in the upland and lake areas should be made much more frequently.

Bonnie Story

RECEIVED

OCT 9 - 2003

REGIONAL PARKS DEPT
COUNTY OF SONOMA

88

October 7, 2003

To: Sonoma County Regional Parks
From: Arlene Kallen, 640 Vine Ave, Sebastopol, CA 95472 — *Arlene Kallen*
Subject: Comments for the Initial Study of the Off Leash Dog area at Ragle Park

Clarify the size of the sites — What is the size in square feet of each site? That should be made clear. The proposal for the dog park in was for 2 acres, so is Site 1 really for just 1 acre now? Site 3 wasn't measure correctly. Additionally, the square footage of the path(s) that would have to be developed to get to the site should be given, because that amount of land would be taken from the park for the project. .

Off leash dogs outside of "off leash area" I have visited Sonoma Valley Regional Park's dog park, seen many dogs off leash outside the "dog park" area. There aren't enough Parks Staff to patrol and give out enough citations to stop that behavior. A letter to the editor of the Sonoma Index Tribune in 2002 (see attached) describes the problem of dogs running wild and lack of enforcement at that park. I've witnessed dogs let off leash at Ragle, and I have spoken to people do that and asked them if they would stop doing that if Ragle had a dog park. They said they wouldn't use a dog park, because they want to run and get exercise with their dog.

Selection of "Alternative Sites"

I am concerned that one area which was recommended as an alternative site isn't being considered. It is the multi-use softball/soccer field just north of the Ragle Road parking lot. The southern half of this field is beyond the softball outfield and it is used for pee wee soccer games only a few weeks in the fall. If a fence were erected around the southern half of that field, it could be used as a dog park for 5/6 of the year, and for soccer for the other 1/6. The fence could be permanent on the perimeter sides, and removable in the middle during the soccer or softball season. The field was developed with funds from the City of Sebastopol, Parks Dept, and a softball group. I know that people already *use* that area, but they are far fewer in number than the people who *use* the other places that have been selected as dog park alternative sites. If this site had been included as an alternative, the softball and soccer groups would have been able to comment on the impacts there.

The dog park proposal states that in the natural area there would be "seasonal closure" for regeneration of grasses and wildflowers. In other words, the dog park isn't planned to be open all year round, and So it could be in a seasonally used turf area, adjacent to a parking lot, where it won't detract from the limited natural areas of the park.

Cumulative impact of siting this project in the "active use" area.

Ragle has 156 acres and 40 of them are on the "active use" side. This Park has been managed according to the Master Plan and its Amendment and the active side is essentially saturated with development. At this point, it has 6 soccer fields, a baseball diamond, little league softball diamond, 4 tennis courts, a volleyball court, the Peace Garden, Rotary Redwood Grove, a gazebo, three large group picnic grounds, a children's playground, an exercise area, a par course, three paved parking lots, and one gravel parking/horse trailer lot.

Another example of how much the park is developed is the most recent park project - the Veterans Memorial Group Picnic arena, which has resulted in 6,000 square feet of pavement within the passive use area of the park, and has degraded the view along the asphalt path that forms the western border of the Live Oak Woodland/Savanna.

In addition to all the development that has taken place, a horse arena project is listed in the Master Plan as something that could be done at a future date. Also, every year the Gravenstein Apple Fair takes place in the live oak woodland/savanna. This Fair, according to the Master Plan, is allowed to impact the Park with a maximum of 5,000 people per festival day. That maximum has been reached, as the application for the 2003 Fair estimates the attendance to be 12,000.

Except for Site 3, all the alternative sites are now used by those who want to visit the park for a nature experience, but cannot utilize the passive west side because of physical limitations or because of its seasonal inaccessibility. These sites will take acreage away from the very heavily used natural areas on the park's east side. And future developments from other special interest groups would also be in this area.

Sites 1, 2, 4 – These sites are within the Oak Woodland/Savanna on the northeast side of the park which the Master Plan designates to be "maintained in its natural state. There is no other place in the eastern area of the park that has this oak habitat, that has been left in a relatively natural state. This remnant grove of oaks serves as an outdoor classroom to local students who walk over from Brook Haven School to study nature. Coast live oaks are vulnerable to "sudden oak death" and so far the beautiful mature trees at Ragle are healthy and provide the community with a place to go and see them.

This is the "park" part of Ragle to myself and many other who don't play sports and can never visit the lower west side because of their physical limitations. There are two reasons that there is an asphalt path ringing this oak woodland: 1) to protect the oak savanna from overuse by foot traffic and 2) to have a year round surface so walkers, cyclists, joggers, families with strollers, and people in wheelchairs can enjoy watching the wildlife, and the scenic views

It is where I took my daughter in a stroller, and where she could walk with baby steps. I have seen quail, hawks and brush rabbits in all these sites. I know that deer browse there because I have seen their scat. I enjoy taking my walks and listening to the bird songs and calls. This area is tranquil and barking dogs will be disturb my enjoyment of bird sounds, and will degrade my park visits. Sites here are far from the parking lot, and many dogs will have to pass through the woodland to get to the them, further disturbing the ambience of the area. Because of the slope of this hillside, the barking will be reflected into the western side of the park as well, disruptive for even those over in that area.

These sites are now used by anyone, both with and without dogs. If a fence is erected and the site becomes a dog park, children won't be able to play tag there, I won't be able to sit on the hill and watch a beautiful sunset, or walk around the loop and watch quail run through the meadow, pecking at seeds. Now we can see grasses and wildflowers such as lupine and poppies through the seasons for a bit of respite from a man-made world. The scenic quality of the sites will be degraded if instead there is fenced-off area that contains garbage containers, dog litter disposal containers, benches, water fountain, dog obstacle courses, and soil that will become either pulverized dust or mud, or covered with foreign bark or gravel.

The soil of these sites is very fragile and turns to dust easily. Intensive trampling of the soil by people and dogs will pulverize the soil, and the wildflower display that is on these sites in the spring will no longer be there for everyone to enjoy

Site 1 is a slope, covered with grasses and flowers in the spring, offering a fine meadow to view while walking on the asphalt path. I can watch birds swooping there, I can see across the western valley from there. It is full of gopher holes, evidence of the gophers which food for the hawks and owls which nest and perch in the trees. Fencing this area, and putting in all the dog park accoutrements, will destroy the views I enjoy of this meadow.

Site 2 is where I have played games while attending children's birthday parties in the group picnic area. A fence there will obstruct views toward the north, the meadow of Site 1. A riparian habitat area is next to this site. A dog park will destroy the scenery for those who want to look up at the meadow wildflowers in spring and summer. It will change the whole character of the picnic area, degrading the experience of having a picnic in a natural peaceful place.

Site 4 has a sloping upper half and a marshy lower half. Evidence of this large area of sedge growing under the live oak trees, and on the open ground area. Why was such a marshy site even selected? In addition to being so wet for half of the year, there are numerous live oak trees on the site, and the foot traffic a dog park will bring will compact the soil under the trees. Soil compaction isn't good for oak trees, and because live oaks are susceptible to sudden oak death they should be protected from any environmental stress that would compromise their health. This site is also directly in view when walking downhill on the asphalt path, so a dog park would be very visually intrusive there, spoiling the view of this little glen.

The Master Plan regarding sites 1,2,4

According to the Master Plan, Ragle Park isn't supposed to consist of just a seasonally inaccessible open space habitat and an intensively developed active use area. The Plan calls for maintaining and protecting the oak/fir savanna in the oak woodland so there is a beautiful place to picnic in a natural area with year round accessibility. *It was left that way to provide for passive recreation within the active use area.* All the development and activity in the active side of the park makes it even more imperative to protect the what remains undeveloped on the eastern side.

The 40 acre "active use" area includes the upland live oak woodland/savanna which is designated by the Master Plan (Management Unit C1) to:

- (1) Maintain trees and understory in their existing state by mitigating any potential disturbance from park use; and
- (2) Provide optimal park user experience in terms of visual and recreation quality within these heavily-used picnic areas

An off leash area is directly contrary to this purpose and management plan and incompatible with the Master Plan.

The Master Plan also states that this woodland/savanna habitat is "particularly valuable because birds and mammals can utilize the larger trees for cover, nesting and perching while relying on the open grass spaces for feeding. The open areas of savanna habitat are suitable for the dominant rodents and burrowers of the grassland (moles, vole, ground squirrels, pocket gopher), as well as their main predators (red-tailed hawk, turkey vulture, white-tailed kite). In addition the barn owl and the great-horned owl inhabit the savanna."

Master Plan Amendment

The Master Plan was amended in so that tennis courts, a sports field and a parking lot could be developed in the northeast corner of the park. The Background part of that Initial Study states: "This left approximately 40 acres of Oak Woodland and Meadows along Ragle Road to be developed to meet the active & passive recreational needs of residents . . ."

The Amendment doesn't mention any change to the Oak Woodland. In fact; the area C1 is shown on the maps that go with the Amendment as remaining intact. Obviously the reason that Parks had to do the Amendment was because they wanted to put **developed** active uses in an area that was designated to be undeveloped. The original plan didn't have any developed active recreation facilities planned for that northeast corner, it was supposed to

have a ranger residence there. Before the Amendment, it was a 3.5 acre "informal play field" adjacent to the oak woodland. Philip Sales responded to a person concerned about losing the beauty of wildflowers on that field by writing "The original Master Plan adopted in 1982 addressed the issues mentioned above by restricting active recreational uses to the relatively flat area of the park along Ragle Road, while preserving and enhancing the back area of the park for more passive use such as the enjoyment of nature." and " . . . it would be possible to collect lupine seeds and redistribute them around the perimeter of the peace garden and in the dry sunny areas around the oaks. Under these conditions the lupine would probably do quite well and can continue to be part of the park environment for everyone's enjoyment." They have thrived there, where will they be planted if these sites are taken away?

Site 3. This site is within the side of the Park that was designated for development with the Master Plan Amendment. The area of this site was erroneously given on both the map and the description in the NOP. What is the true area of the site, in square feet? Park staff told me it was really between 2.5 and 3 acres. A dog park here would impact the soil, it would turn into a pulverized dust bowl. There is already a lot of chain link around the tennis courts, so a fence here wouldn't look so out of place.

Site 5. Impacts: aesthetics, noise, soil erosion, water quality of nearby tributary. Sometimes I sit in the Peace Garden and quietly contemplate what a dog park would sound like next to it.

Site 6. Impacts: incompatible with Park Master Plan, placing a dog park here would mar the scenic vista at the Atascadero Creek trailhead. This grassland area (Management Unit A of the Master Plan) is part of the "passive use" area that is designated to remain as undeveloped and habitat for wildlife and plant communities. I have seen golden pheasants in this area. Because it is a slope, the soil would erode and wash away into the creek's watershed. This hillside is visible from the wet meadow, and a dog park would be an eyesore here.

Alternative Proposal to Restore the Live Oak Savanna A group of Ragle Park Walkers has submitted an alternative proposal to the Parks Dept (see attached). It is a proposal to restore the C1 oak woodland, and do the interpretative nature study signs suggested in the Master Plan. We would like to be allowed to do this if a dog park isn't situated there.

November 26, 2002

Jim Angelo, Director
Sonoma County Regional Parks Department
2300 County Center Dr. Suite 120A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Dear Mr. Angelo,

The Ragle Park Walkers is a group of regular park users who are interested keeping the park a great place to walk and observe nature. We enjoy Ragle Park as it has been developed along the guidelines of its Master Plan and Amendment for the past twenty years. Those documents show us that the area proposed for a dog park is within the oak woodland and savanna and it has been maintained in its natural state so that it can provide a quality visual experience in the picnic areas. It gives park visitors of all ages and abilities the opportunity to enjoy visiting a live oak habitat all year long, even when the western Atascadero Creek floodplain becomes inaccessible.

When we reviewed the Ragle's Master Plan, we learned that regeneration and expansion of the oak habitat, as well as providing educational signage is part of the management plan for that area. Our group would like to assist the Parks Department in realizing these two goals of the Master Plan. We understand that volunteers play an important role in maintaining our county parks and we want to volunteer for this project.

I am enclosing our proposal to help restore this oak savanna and woodland and create interpretive signs. Please consider this as an alternative to putting the dog park there.

I would appreciate discussing this proposal in greater detail with you and your staff, in person or by phone. Please contact me at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Arlene Kallen
640 Vine Ave
Sebastopol, CA 95472
584-9121 ext. 5 (work) 823-9552 (home)

Cc. John Ryan, Volunteer Coordinator
Philip Sales, Park Planner
Michele Julene, Environmental Specialist
Jim McCray, Park Manager
Mary Jo Delos, Regional Parks Foundation

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OCT 9 - 2003

**REGIONAL PARKS DEPT
COUNTY OF SONOMA**

Ragle Ranch Park – Upland Oak Savanna Picnic Area Native Plant Restoration and Interpretive Signs

Goals:

1) Restore and regenerate grasses, herbs and tree seedlings in the live oak and fir savanna in the upper northeast part of Ragle Park to ensure that the trees, their understory and meadows remain healthy and exist for future generations.

2) Produce and set up interpretive signs for the area, so that park visitors are given information regarding the oak savanna ecosystem and the importance of its native plant and animal species.

Objectives: Volunteers will work with the Parks staff to plan for restoration with native plants and to schedule planting and maintenance workdays. Volunteers will work with staff, local experts and conservation groups to develop educational signs for self-guided nature study.

Master Plan: This proposal is compatible with the Master Plan for Ragle Ranch Park (adopted 1982, amended 1993). According to the Plan, the oak savanna is to be managed to "Maintain trees and understory in their existing state by mitigating any potential disturbance from park uses." Also, the Plan states: "environmental education can be used as a tool to reduce potential disturbance and provide maximum visitor experience" and the savanna management would include "providing signs and information regarding the wildlife value of the oak habitat".

Funding: We will coordinate with the Regional Parks Foundation to develop funding for the cost of sign materials. We will work with groups such as the Atascadero Green Valley Creek Watershed Council, Circuit Rider, and the Native Plant Society to obtain plants, seeds and tree seedlings. Funds for Ragle Park restoration and environmental education could be designated from a portion of the permit fees of the annual Gravenstein Apple Fair.

This proposal would include the area being used one weekend a year for the Gravenstein Apple Fair. It would exclude uses such as an off-leash dog area.

We are some of the members of the Ragle Park Walkers Association and will be the initial volunteers to work with the Parks Department to plan, develop, and implement this proposal.

Carol Mitchel
Susan Fisher
Jerry Meshulam

Arlene Kallen
Judith Rousseau
Marissa Vossen

Bradford Kallen
Sandra Luce
Ann Conger

Jo Bentz
Rhonda Mikolaitis
Andree MacColl

November 2002



SONOMA
COUNTY
REGIONAL
PARKS

JIM R. ANGELO
DIRECTOR

December 11, 2002

Arlene Kallen
640 Vine Avenue
Sebastopol, CA 95472

Dear Ms. Kallen:

Thank you for your letter. The proposal is an interesting one and may have merit. However, as you know, the Board of Supervisors has asked us to take another look at the issue of locating a dog park at Ragle Ranch Park. We are in the process of determining what the staff resources and other costs are to present to the Board for further direction. If we get Board direction to move forward with the project, the area of your proposal and other sites at Ragle would be included in our review and report to the Board. We anticipate requesting direction from the Board in February 2003.

I appreciate your offer provide the volunteer labor and the raising of monies to see the project to completion. Again, thank you for your interest. We will contact you when we will be asking direction from the Board of Supervisors.

Sincerely,

Jim R. Angelo
Director

JRA/bb

S:\DIRECTOR\Correspondence\RagleDgpk\Kallen_11Dec02.doc

300
County Center Drive
Sebastopol, CA 95472
CA 95472
707/568-2041
Fax: 707/568-2042
www.sonoma-county.org/parks

October 9, 2003

TO: Michelle Julene, Environmental Advisor
Sonoma County Regional Parks

FROM: Elizabeth Carothers Herron
Sebastopol Resident

Elizabeth C. Herron

RE: Proposed Rangle Ranch Dog Park

I am writing to express my support for a dog park at Ragle Ranch and to inform you of my site preferences.

As a long-time Sebastopol resident I have long wished we had a park where dogs could be allowed off-leash. I was glad to learn of the Ragle Ranch plan and pleased that the matter has been pursued, since the original site selection did not seem the best and I did not support construction of the dog park at that site.

Now that there are other potential sites, I urge approval of the dog park. Further, I want to weigh in on which sites I believe would be preferable.

Site #3 near the tennis courts might work, but I think it would be nicer for both the dogs and their owners if the site were a bit farther from the fully developed area of the park.

I think **sites #1 and #2** would not be good. Those areas are oak and meadow land, and I think that fencing in that area would interrupt both visual psychological space. Also, one acre seems unnecessarily large and constitutes a significant loss of habitat.

I favor **site #6** because of size (ample), location (undeveloped), and variety of terrain. Perhaps if anything it could be a little smaller.

The size of **site #5** seems about right, but that site has no trees.

There remains **site #4** near the convergence of trails. That area is low-lying and the slope gradient is such that, in my experience, during the winter it can get quite muddy.

*So -I favor **site #6** slightly reduced in size if that can be changed at this point so that less wild habitat is relinquished.

As a second choice, I would support site #3, though I find it definitely less preferable because of its location where there is little or no wildness.

Should you have further mailings or wish to call me, please do so at the following address and voice mail phone number:

2630 South Edison

Sebastopol, CA 95472

707-522-9000

I am opposed to putting any sort of dog park in Ragle for several reasons. First of all the location suggestions are not appropriate as not one of them includes regular irrigation. Unless these areas are irrigated regularly they are going to quickly smell of dog urine, perhaps to the point that not even the dogs are going to enjoy their designated area. Those spots selected down near the Peace Park would not doubt interfere with whatever peace individuals might try to find there, either visually or aurally as the happy dogs and their owners romp and play. Another area suggested is located in a wetland area (check out the plants that live there). I particularly object to giving the dog parkers 1 whole acre of Ragle for their pets in an area that is covered with wildflowers in the spring. Birds and other critters frequent this area which will certainly cease when the dogs and their owners arrive. And with a whole acre to roam, how are these owners going to keep up with their dog's excrement? I can imagine loads of it remaining since no one saw their dog do it. The few overworked employees at Ragle aren't able to keep up with the current number of non-leashed dogs at the park. I can't imagine how they'll be able to enforce the leash law when dog owners from throughout the county descend on the new doggie park. Just because someone offers you \$5,000 to build them a dog park doesn't mean there aren't hidden costs for the rest of us that you're not considering, the least of which are the liability issues regarding dog bites (more dogs, more opportunities to bite other dogs and humans, especially kids). The dog park is not an appropriate use for a park such as Ragle.



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OCT 9 - 2003

**REGIONAL PARKS DEPT
COUNTY OF SONOMA**

**Ragle Ranch Regional Park
PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA**

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

Name: Molly Matheson
Address: 103016 Caraway Dr Sebastopol 95472
e-mail: mollymatheson@hotmail.com

Are you on the mailing list already? ☒ yes ☐ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

7777 Bodega Avenue A-4

Sebastopol, CA 95472

OCT 8, 2003

Ms Michelle Julene

Sonoma County Regional Parks Dept.

2300 County Drive Ste 120 A

Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Dear Ms Jolene and Friends at the Park Department,

We are submitting this letter with our comments about the possible dog park/dog run in Ragle Park in the hope that they will help to influence the decision made about this proposal.

We live in Sebastopol at Burbank Heights Senior Apartments and we go to the park very often for what tranquility and renewal is offered there. We know many others for whom this is also true who are not inclined to write letters but who also feel as we do.

We hike the trails and walk through all parts of the park and know every section of the park and the life there. Surely everyone can see that the park is relatively small and does a big job already considering how large and bustling our community has become. We feel that a fenced dog run to be added to this environment is not a good thing under any circumstances. We would hope that when the initial master plan for the park is considered it will be found that such a proposal is not consistent with the plan.

We would agree that perhaps dog owners and their dogs should have a place for this but not in this park that is already at its limit in terms of how it serves. We also know many dog owners who feel the same way but can only hope that their comments get to you too.

Our phone number is 823-5862 and our e-mail address is michelerob@saber.net if you should need to be in touch or want to send us information about this issue.

We acknowledge that this letter is rather formal and ,we hope, simple but our hearts are really torn to see that this should even have become an issue.

Sincerely,

Michelle Linfante
Robert H. Roberts
Michele Linfante
Robert Roberts

Paul & Marisa Vossen
8660 STARLIGHT LANE
SEBASTOPOL, CA 95472

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OCT 9 - 2003
REGIONAL PARKS DEPT
COUNTY OF SONOMA

To the County Parks Dept,
I have been to one
meeting at the County building
on the dog park issue and
I use the Eagle Park almost
daily (with my dog on a leash).
My daughter also runs their for
high school and my son has always
played soccer there.

I am totally against
the dog park - and am
really angry that at all
the uses for the park that
this would be a proving for you!
The Oak Woodland area of
the park is totally tranquil and
beautiful - this would be ruined
by a fenced in area with dogs
barking.

The Creek trail already has
too many dogs off leash and
the dog park would bring more
people who would use it for letting

their dog off lead.

My dog along with everyone
else dog is perfectly "happy"
being on a long lead - really!!

The park already has a high
dog use. And for especially the
elderly without dogs - it is
very disruptive as it is - ~~with~~
~~lead~~ I believe that a dog
park would discourage people
from using the park who come
there for quiet!

The idea of putting the dog
park in the centre of the beautiful
Oak woodland is repulsive!

What is going on!!

Please stop that nonsense
now!

Schastopol
Resident

Marisa Vorseh
Marisa Vorseh

RECEIVED

OCT 9 - 2003

REGIONAL PARKS DEPT
COUNTY OF SONOMA

To: Regional Parks Dept.

I would like to express my strong opposition to the idea of a Dog Park in Ragle Park.

I go there regularly to walk or run & have noticed that many people use the park for walking, running & relaxation. Many of them also walk their dogs there and that is fine.

But I see no need for a special area "just for dogs". To me, Ragle is such a beautiful, peaceful, tranquil place, where people can get away to play & relax - often with their children.

It is special for the beautiful oak trees & walking path. It is a place where we can enjoy Nature.

It does not need to use a special area for dogs. That is causing things

very far, in my opinion!
It is enough that they are on the
paths & areas which are used by
people constantly! And they have
to be "cleaned up aftn" by their owners,
hopelessly.

Keep the Park for People! Many
users of the Park are very opposed
to the Dog Park, but their feelings
are being ignored by the dog
owners.

Keep & protect the peace & beauty of
Ragle Park. The dogs can play
at home.

Very Sincerely,
Phyllis De Joseph

P.S. I am a Sebastopol resident
& daily user of the Park.

October 9, 2003

Michelle Julene
Sonoma County Regional Parks
2300 County Center Drive #120a
Santa Rosa CA 95403

Dear Ms Julene:

Re: Ragle Park Off-leash Dog Area

I attended the 9/25/03 meeting at Ragle Park. I am very concerned about having an off-leash area anywhere in the park. At the meeting, dog park proponents spoke about letting their dogs run off-leash in the undeveloped wetlands area of the park. This riparian corridor is so important to the wildlife living near Atascadero Creek, and to people in the neighborhood who want to enjoy getting out in nature without taking a long drive. I think it is possible the dog park would draw more people with their dogs initially to the off-leash area, and then continue down into the wetlands. In spite of the dog park proponents maintaining that nearly all dog park users obey the rules, as the meeting broke up, one dog owner took his dog over to the soccer field and let him off leash to romp around the field, under cover of darkness.

As I'm sure you are aware, There are fewer parks in the Sebastopol area than in other parts of Sonoma County. This is clearly shown by the attached map. Even though the surrounding countryside appears to have a lot of open space, it is all privately owned. Private property is also cross-fenced, and may or may not be usable as habitat by wildlife.

As to Sites 1 and 2, I am very strongly opposed to them. I think it would be a travesty to take this beautiful oak woodland and put chain-link enclosure anywhere in it. Also, local lore maintains that there was once an Indian village in that part of the park. At a meeting regarding the park about a dozen years ago, I met a man who told me he was 98 years old and lived on Ragle Road his entire life. He said when he was a boy, he and his father would walk their cow down to Mr Ragle's bull, and there were still a few Indians living there because Mr Ragle allowed them to continue living in the oak grove as long as they wanted. A friend who is an archeologist working for the national park system did a brief survey of the park out of personal interest about 25 years ago and told me at that time that she believed the village was in the oak woodland area.

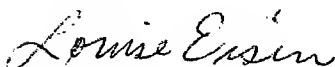
Sites 5 and 6 are too close to the Peace Garden, where people go to sit, and just be quiet. I sat there myself a few evenings ago with a friend, feeling grateful we weren't sitting next to a chain-link off-leash area.

Site 4 is too close to the undeveloped part of the park, and out of sight of the rangers' kiosk. The dog park fence is proposed to be only 4 feet high. The Sebastopol animal shelter won't let you adopt a medium or large dog with only a 4 foot high fence because many dogs can easily jump over a 4 foot fence.

Site 3 would be the least offensive location, being next to the tennis courts, and easily accessible.

I want to thank you and all of the terrific staff at Regional Parks for doing a great job with this issue. I especially admire your poise in refereeing the opposing sides. I would also like to note that during these tough economic times Regional Park employees have taken a 2.1% pay cut to help save county jobs. If the dog park people would be willing to donate 2.1% of their own income, perhaps they could purchase some marginal property and maintain the turf themselves.

Sincerely,



Louise Eisen

C: Mike Reilly

Friends of Ragle Dog Park
P.O. Box 2302, Sebastopol, CA 95473
(707) 823-8185

Date: October 9, 22003

To: Sonoma County Regional Parks Department
2300 County Center Drive
Room A120
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Re: Scoping comments regarding the development of an off-leash dog park at Ragle Ranch Park.

We are pleased to submit the following comments regarding the site alternatives at Ragle Ranch Regional Park for an off-leash dog park. The first part of these comments will address each specific alternative. The second part will consist of general comments regarding the creation of an off-leash dog park at Ragle Ranch Regional Park.

Site-specific comments:

Site 1:

This is the original site considered by both the Parks Department and the Friends of Ragle Dog Park. We still believe this site would work well as an off-leash dog park. However, if selecting this site would result in continued protracted conflict, we would prefer that an alternative site be selected.

Site 2:

We do not believe that this is a viable site for an off-leash dog park because this area receives significant use as a play area by people picnicking at the near-by picnic tables.

Site 3:

This site is too small to be considered for an off-leash dog park. Another negative issue is that this site is in close proximity to both the tennis courts and a baseball area, and it is very likely balls from both areas would fall into the off-leash area.

Site 4:

This site has the potential to work well as an off-leash dog park. The current size indicated on the map (.3 acres) may be too small, but if the current size is expanded towards the equestrian parking area, the additional space would be sufficient to contain an off-leash dog park. The site has other positive attributes: plenty of shade, existing access to water, good access from two parking lots (particularly if there is handicap parking at the equestrian parking lot), and good drainage.

Site 5:

This site has the potential to work well as an off-leash dog park. However, if an archeological study needs to be performed, the Parks Department will need to pay for it. This site also has good access, particularly if there is handicap parking adjacent to the dog park site.

Site 6:

This site has a number of issues that may make it unsuitable for an off-leash dog park. The first is that the site is located in the wild part of the park. The site's remoteness may also be a safety issue. It also may be an archeological site considering that it is adjacent to Site 5.

Site 7 (new site):

On the attached map, we have identified a seventh site that we believe should be placed under consideration and studied. This site is adjacent to the kiosk at the park entrance. It is note located near any sensitive areas and is not used for any purpose other than providing a walkway to the Ragle Road.

General Scoping Comments:

1. The consultants should study the impact on the back wild part of Ragle Ranch Park of not building an off-leash dog park at Ragle Ranch Park. Currently there are a significant number of people who walk their dogs in the back part of the park and the environmental impact of that activity may be greater than the environmental impact of building an off-leash dog park in the general use area of Ragle Ranch Park.
2. The consultant should study the impact of developing an off-leash dog park that is smaller than ½ acre in size. We believe that if the site that is selected is less than ½ acre in size, the turf or topsoil will become overly impacted, resulting in excess erosion and degradation of plant life.
3. We also believe that if the site is less than ½ acre in size, it will be very difficult fund raise the necessary money to pay for the dog park. Potential donors have indicated that they would like a site that is at least ½ acre in size.
4. We have conducted an extensive search in and around the Sebastopol area for an alternative area to site an off-leash dog park including asking the Planning Director of the City of Sebastopol if there is any city-owned land that could be used for a dog park (the answer was no). We also examined the following areas for potential dog park sites:
 - a. The Laguna area by the Sebastopol Community Center
 - b. Ives Park
 - c. Morris Street (by Public Works building)
 - d. The area behind Palm Drive Hospital/Walker Street

The result of our search is that none of the areas listed above have the appropriate space to contain an off-leash dog park. We believe that Ragle Ranch Regional Park is the only site that has the space to develop an off-leash dog park in the entire western part of Sonoma County.


5. Because there is no suitable place for dog owners to take their dogs for off-leash recreation, there are a significant number of people who drive their dogs to Santa Rosa or Petaluma. Therefore the consultants should study the impact on the environment and on congestion on our local roads of not building an off-leash dog park at Ragle Ranch Park.

Thank you for taking these comments under consideration. If you have any questions or would like discuss particular comments, please feel free to call Matt Stevens at 707-823-8185.

Sincerely,



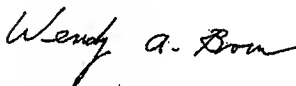
Jill Breitner



Mark Neely



Kathy Austin



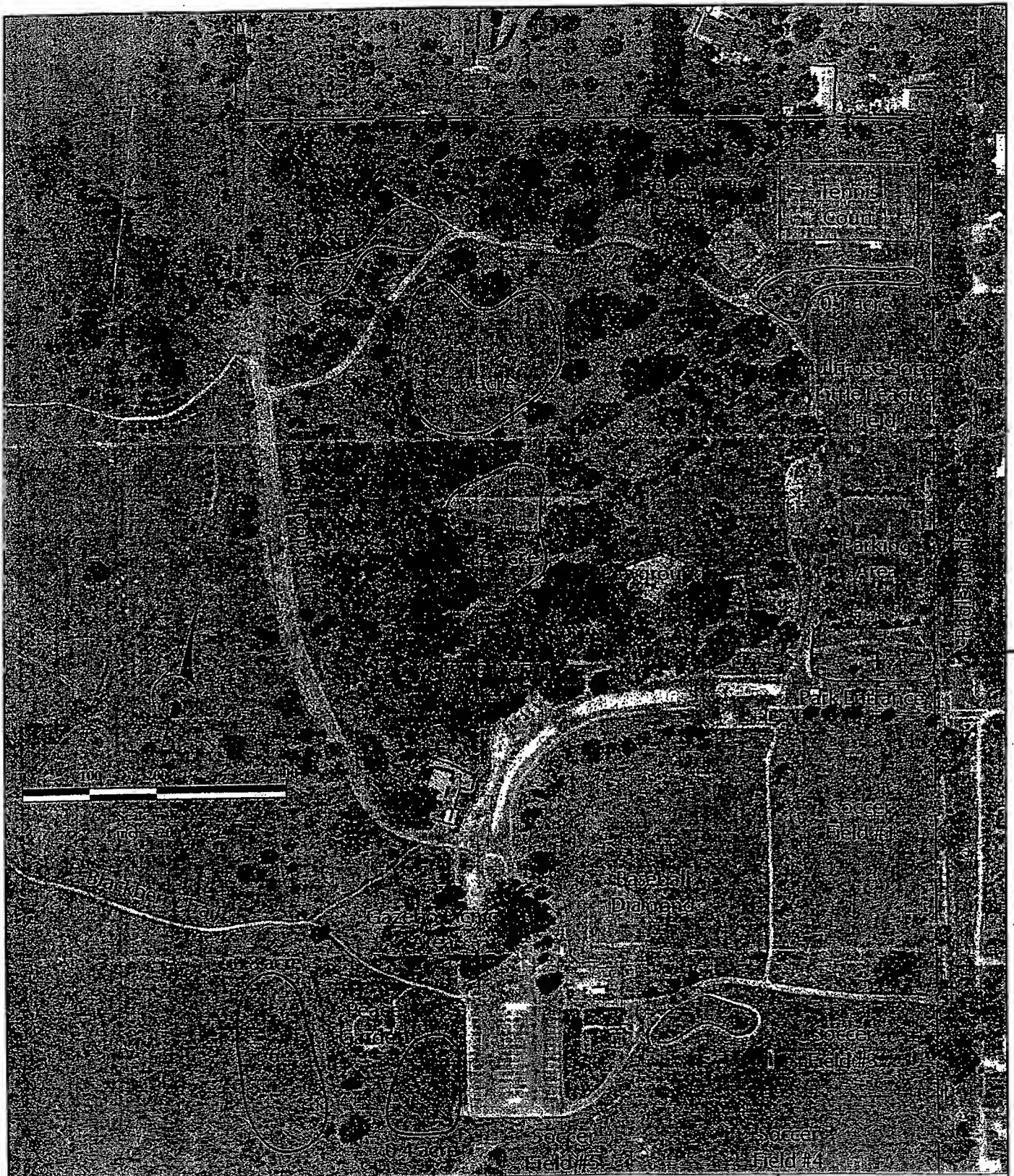
Wendy A. Born



Shannon Stevens



Matt Stevens



BRELJE & RACE
 CONSULTING CIVIL ENGINEERS
 5570 SCYLANE BLVD. SANTA ROSA CA 95403 707/574-1322

Ragle Ranch Regional Park
 County of Sonoma, California

Date: September 2003
 Job #: 2660
 W/RP722602660-030501(NORAI)

Alternative Off-leash Dog Area Locations

Figure 2

Michelle Julene, Senior Specialist,
Sonoma County Regional Parks Dept.
2300 County Center Drive #120A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

October 10, 2003

RE: Comments on Initial Study for the Ragle Ranch Dog Park

Dear Ms. Julene,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Ragle Ranch Dog Park. I understand that there is a great need in the urban areas of the county for a place to exercise dogs.

I am a native of Sonoma County. I have walked each of the County Parks since they were established and know each one intimately. They are a place of solitude and relaxation in times of stress and worry. Parks are sometimes the only intact areas for wildlife. As each year passes, I notice the development of county parks. Active sports and recreation centers take up space where animals and plants once lived. These sports and recreation centers are important for the public, but they come at a sacrifice to the integrity of the preservation and restoration of the scenic and historical resources of your county parks. They also cost more for maintenance.

The mission statement of County Parks is very important:
The Sonoma County Regional Parks Department enhances the quality of life in the County by providing recreational, social and cultural opportunities for the public, and by leading in the preservation, conservation, restoration and promotion of the natural, scenic and historical resources within Sonoma County.

The Master Plan for Ragle Ranch adopted in 1982 guides this mission. When the issue of cows grazing and impacting the back areas of the park was raised, residents were adamant in wanting protection for the wildlife. The cows were removed. The land was protected for nesting birds and wildlife. One of the sites for the dog park will impact the uplands of that area.

In 1987, groundbreaking ceremonies were held for the Peace Garden. This site was not chosen arbitrarily, but emerged as studies based on research of a world view that relate to the relationship to earth and humanity over time evolved. Each peace site has unique factors that make it special. The Ragle Ranch site is unique in that it is located midway between the Russian Orthodox Church (Ft. Ross) and the Roman Catholic Church Mission at the

town of Sonoma. Hundreds of people have visited the site, some from Russia and other parts of the world. I have taken my elementary school classes there to talk about world peace and to enjoy the views and solitude. The Ragle site is important. Two of the proposed dog park sites are here by the garden. I have visited Badger Park and Sonoma Valley Park when the dog parks were being used. Sometimes it is quiet, but more often than not, dogs are barking and socializing. (Doing what dogs are supposed to do) Having the dog park in Ragle at this site would impact the Peace Garden. The fenced and dusty area would also distract from the beauty of the garden. This is not an appropriate place for a dog park. There is only one peace site like Ragle. Let's not impact it.

The other sites by the group area take away valuable Oak Woodland and grassland habitat, fields of lupine and wildflowers, a foraging area for raptors, owls and deer, and space for group games when the group area has birthday parties.

The one site that is appropriate for a dog park is alternative 3. It has the least amount of negative impacts. However the site is small, not popular with the dog owners, and would be muddy in winter, dusty in summer. The skateboard users wanted a skateboard park in Ragle. That too was inappropriate for this park. It took awhile but a sensible place was found for the skateboard park that will benefit everyone.

Let's not rush into this decision.

- **The Master Plan of Ragle Park must not be changed.**
- **Keep the remaining open area of Ragle Ranch for future generations of people and wildlife habitat.**
- **Request that an effort be made to site the dog park outside of Ragle Ranch Park.**
- **At the next meeting facilitate a group forming to investigate sites and funding for a dog park in West County that is based on consensus.**

Sincerely,

Carol Vellutini

610 Willrush St.
Santa Rosa, CA 95401
707-546-6308

Michele Julene
RPD Environmental Specialist
Sonoma County Regional Parks
2300 County Center Drive, Suite 120A
Santa Rosa, California 95403

Dear Michele,

Enclosed I would like to send a letter that I have previously written to our County Supervisors which reflects how I feel regarding the proposed off-leash area at Ragle Park. For almost 10 years my family has lived next door to this park, and have enjoyed the many activities that this park offers. There are many things available in this park but the most compelling and important aspect is the tranquility of this park. Children's soccer tends to be an incredible drain on the environment at this park due to the fact that families and teams bring food items that are heavily packaged and people seem unable to clean up after themselves.

However, it is the many unseen ecosystems within the park that many of us come to enjoy. There are seasons in this park, with its beautiful spring flowers, the animals,, who live here that give birth to their offspring and the many, many other things that occur that we seldom see on our urban streets.

It is imperative that we fight to save the many inhabitants in our park from the damage and destruction of their home. I believe that any type of "exclusive use areas", especially that allows unleashed dogs, would be fatal to many of the wildlife that lives there now. I spend a lot of time observing people with their dogs in this park. Currently, as long as you have animals on a leash everyone can enjoy the park in its entirety. However; if you allow these animals to have a free reign, as it were, there are so many fundamental things wrong with this idea.

I have 10 years of experience with dogs through working with Guide Dogs for the Blind, Inc. Many family pets have not ever had any formal training or socialization. To allow these animals to run lose together is dangerous. Even the best trained dogs have their moments and no one can predict when a dog will turn on another. I have observed many people in the park, with their dogs on leash, who cannot control their animal. The dogs drag them around the park snarling and lunging at other animals. Usually the person who has a small dog, they can pick up, will generally be able to remove the smaller dog to safety. This is incredibly concerning to me. The liability for damages that will occur with this off leash park area must fall with someone. Does that State pick up this tab? What happens when a child is endangered. There are many children who frequent this park, should this not be a consideration to the supervisors? Why can't the Off-leash Dog Park Association find a more suitable area that would not

Michele Julene
Page Two
October 9, 2003

endanger the lives of animals and the people who enjoy this park and have access to all areas and stop the restriction and exclusive use stuff. This exclusive use limits the park for all county residents.

I have spent many long hours fighting to save Ragle Park from the many people who feel that because this beautiful area is here, that they should have a piece of it. I feel that this new off-leash dog park association, and when the parents of the local skateboarders wanted a piece they also had an "association", feel "Entitlement" there is no entitlement. This land was donated so that ALL people would have the opportunity to enjoy the peace and tranquility and the sheer nature that occurs in this delicate area. We used to have a family of pheasants a couple of years ago who lived in the trees and walked the back part of Ragle. For a long time it was exciting to see them with their children foraging for their food. However, this was cut short by someone who felt that this area was also a great off-leash area to run their dog. Before the Park Rangers could stop this, the family was gone.

Some people in Sebastopol have always felt that their needs should be met, no matter the cost to anyone else and unfortunately every time a special interest group wants a piece of Ragle they always come with money. We, the protectors, however, fight for Ragle without a benefactor and, knowing that money can be a motivator, always feel that pain more closely to our hearts as proposals always come with a higher hidden price tag. Why is it so difficult for these people to go to a prior developed area of Sebastopol and let Ragle Ranch alone.

Respectfully submitted,

Vera Burdick
448 Ragle Road
Sebastopol
(707)823-2966

September 24, 2002

Mr. Mike Reilly
Fifth District Supervisor
575 Administration Drive, Suite 100A
Santa Rosa, California 95403-2887

Dear Mr. Reilly:

I am writing in regards to the proposed dog park that is currently being considered at Ragle Park. I was unable to attend your Sebastopol meeting, as I work evenings. I feel that there was a misrepresentation of the proposed park in the flyer that was distributed to us surrounding home owners. It in no way reflected the actual size of this proposed exclusive use area. The flyer showed a smaller than the tennis court area. It is indeed two acres. This is an incredibly large area to close off and exclude those of us who enjoy Ragle Park; who do not wish to have a dog. I am very disturbed that this is such a large and potentially unsupervised area for the benefit of "DOGS". What is up with that?

I was, for a little over 10 years employed at Guide Dogs for the Blind, Inc., located in San Rafael, California. When I chose to have a family I left for a part time job closer to home in order to raise my children myself. This facility is a 4 acre school that not only housed dogs but our clients came to stay for 30 days. In which time they were trained to use their 'Guide Dog'. This is a facility that is overseen by the State of California. The state requires that any persons who train dogs for the visually impaired in California must be licensed through the State of California. This is a two year apprenticeship followed by a 4 hour demonstration of your dog's training. This is not, by any means, an easy profession to get into and we required that our potential licensed instructors to have many years experience as dog handlers, either in the military or search and rescue. By the time the apprentice underwent their testing with the State, they had many more hours of dog training experience with our facility and trained their personal guide dog for the test. Guide Dogs for the Blind, Inc. bred their own dogs for the program and would only accept donated pedigreed dogs with a seven generation pedigree. This was done to help to promote the success of our dogs when they were trained service dogs. Less than 50% of our dogs made the program largely due to behavioral issues and some were "career changed" due to health reasons.

All of this background regarding Guide Dogs for the Blind is presented to you so that you can see that there are many concerns I have regarding a two acre perimeter, 4' high fence for dogs that by no means are given any of the training that these Guide Dogs received and are going to be turned loose without any control. The Guide facility runs 3 times a day what we would call a 'community run'. This was 10 to 15 dogs in a ten foot high fenced area that was no bigger than a maybe 15'X30" run with no less than 3 licensed instructors. These instructors were needed to control any skirmish that may arise when turning even extremely well trained dogs out without leashes. Our dogs received training from the moment they left our facilities at 8 weeks to be raised with our 4H families until they returned to our school to begin their formal guide dog training until the time they were either 'dropped' from our program or graduated with their new masters or mistresses. They were trained by licensed instructors who received their licenses through the State of California. They had seven generation pedigrees and still less than 50% made the program.

You are being asked to allow homeowners who have dogs who have minimal training or socialization to turn their dog's loose, not in a small 'well' enclosed area, but two acres of unsupervised chaos. I believe that these dog people love their dogs and possibly love them like their children. And therefore, do not see that their 'dog/child' can possibly be a little monster in a social environment. I am concerned that these people will be too close to the play area and

picnic area that small children will be in. A four foot fence will not stop a dog if it wants something to eat or to chase.

I personally had a large dog who was a 'career change' dog from Guide Dogs for the Blind. I knew that regardless of the many hours of licensed instruction and one on one time we spent together as we both went to work at the facility full time and were docents on graduation days one Saturday every month. I know that on a leash I could always keep her focused and under control, but on few occasions, at either the school or on the beach when there were other dogs present, I could not guarantee that they would not argue over territory. My presence would cause my dog to want to protect me, or that another dog would simply attack for no reason. I, with all my background, could never guarantee that I knew what my dog was capable of around small children or other dogs.

I believe that to give this size area to homeowner dog owners would be to invite the potentiality of disaster. I believe that when something goes wrong, liability would be tremendous to the County of Sonoma. I am of the continued support of staying with the master plan at Ragle Park and stop all these unnecessary requests for exclusive use of the park by persons who want to fence in and take an open space that is meant for anyone to use not just someone with a dog or a skateboard or whatever else comes down the line.

I am asking that more time be given to the supporters of the Master Plan at Ragle Park and that we be given the same opportunities to have the presentations to preserve this precious environment. Please delay your decision until other, more suitable, areas can be explored.

Respectfully,

Vera Altizio-Burdick
448 Ragle Road
Sebastopol, California

CC: Valerie Brown - First District Supervisor
Mike Kerns - Second District Supervisor
Tim Smith - Third District Supervisor
Paul L. Kelly - Fourth District Supervisor

Inside This Issue:

Take Me to School

Poster Pullout—

Put this poster in your backpack and be the hit of your school!

centerfold

No Fleas, Please—

Pointers from our veterinarian about flea control

pg. 6

Pleased to Meet You—

Blind children get up close and personal with Guide Dogs

pg. 7

Gift Items Galore—

Check out our Gift Shop mail order catalog with lots of new gift items for your shopping pleasure

center insert



Guide Dog News

The quarterly publication of Guide Dogs for the Blind



Bow Wow Luau!

Fun Day 2003

What better way to bring out the smiles on our raisers' faces than to hand them their new puppies. The "New Puppy Delivery" is undoubtedly the highlight of our annual Fun Day celebrations. This year 47 puppies were delivered to their eager arms (pictured above are the new puppy recipients at our Oregon campus).

Some 3,400 people on both campuses (Boring, Oregon and San Rafael, California) witnessed the happy events. Raisers and their families also brought along 600 of the puppies they are currently raising to join in the festivities.

Fun Days are celebrated each year to honor the volunteer puppy raisers who devote their energies to making good canine citizens out of their fluffy charges.

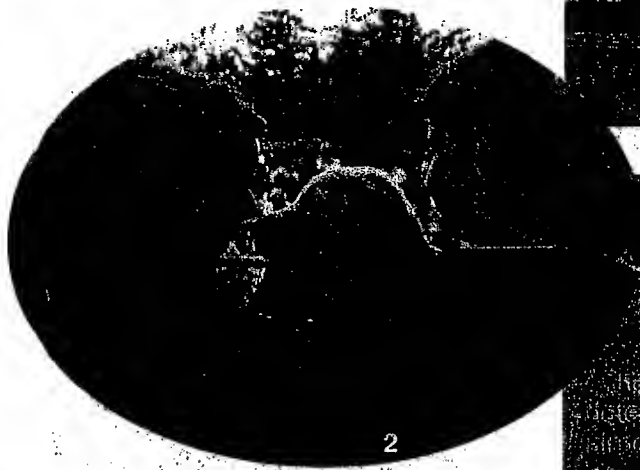
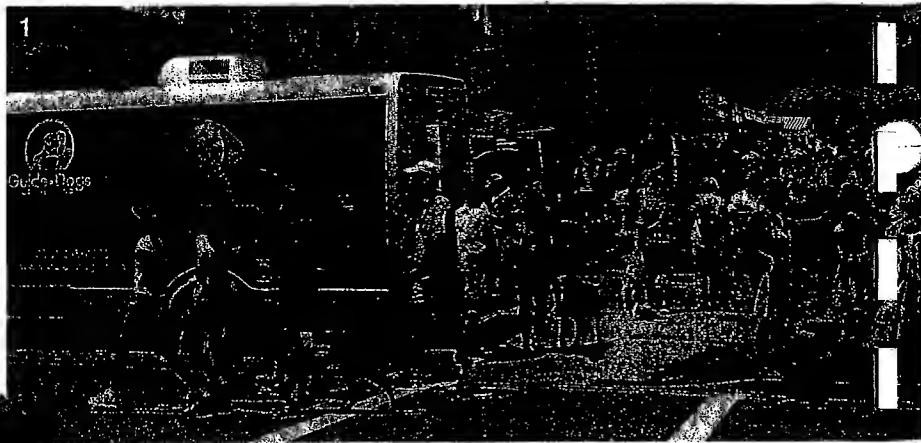
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Full Member

Bow Wow Luau!

Photo Gallery

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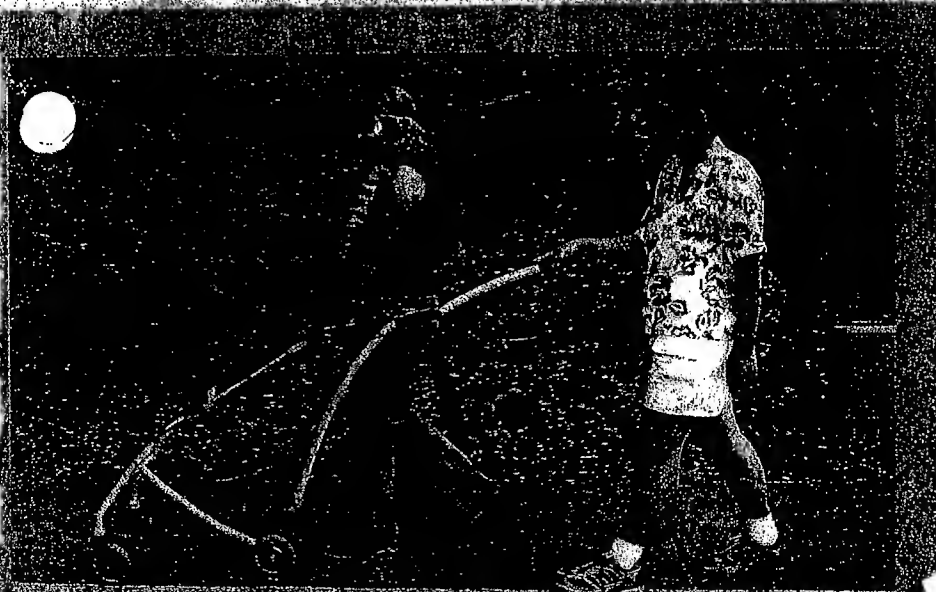
Counter-clockwise from top: 1. Fun Day visitors stream past the Puppy Delivery truck at the California campus. 2. Bethany Andl gives a kiss on the nose to her new Golden Retriever pup, "Fargo." 3. CEO Bob Phillips and Founder Lois Merrihew deliver remarks to the crowd at the California campus. 4. Don't call us, we'll call you... pups delighted onlookers with their antics as raisers compete to see which of their puppies would respond faster to the "Come" command. 5. Shutterbugs and "puparazzi" were everywhere for the puppy delivery at the Oregon campus!

Check out more photos on our website: www.guidedogs.com!

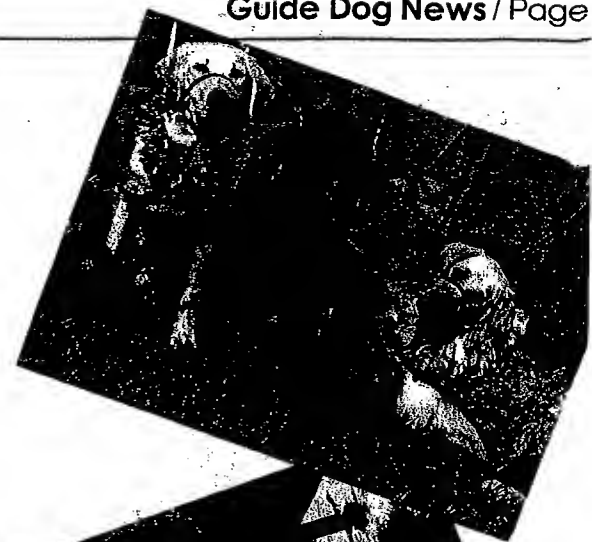




Guide Dogs is evaluating the potential of Standard Poodles for use as Guide Dogs for people with allergies in addition to their blindness. Three puppies have entered our puppy raising program and attended the Oregon Fun Day to the delight of raisers, staff and visitors. Meet "Toby," "Eddie," and "Pirate." The three (and another named "Serena") have been placed with raisers in Oregon. The pilot program will evaluate eight Poodles and track their success.



What more? When someone with vision loss applies to our school, our dog handlers send professionals to evaluate their independence. We have kids in addition. The person is shown before experience. Using a dog as a guide, they are introduced to the concept of fully by taking a walk with the guide and simulating the movement of the dog by opening and closing harness and leading the person. Here, on Fun Day, Apprentice Instructor Frank Kelly (right) uses a wheeled tool called a "hand simulator" to also be used to simulate the movement of the dog. Evaluators steer the "dog" with the rear handle and the person with the front handle gets a feel for interpreting the dog's movement through the harness handle.



From the top: Dressed to impress, these Guide Dog puppy are truly in the spirit of Bow Wow Luau!; Jacob Martin shows off Golden Retriever "Falco"; the Walkinson family with yellow Lab "Daphne"; Daisy Phillips introduces her new Golden pup, "Frontier," to a friend.

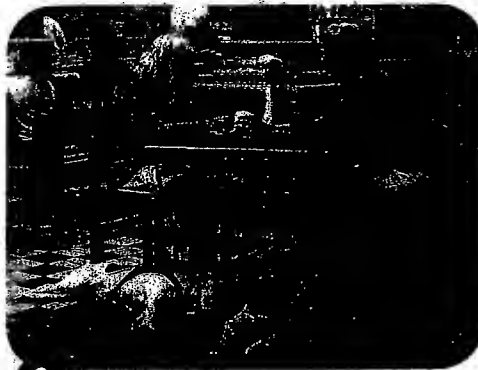
Learning About Guide Dogs and Blindness



1

Puppies are born in the Guide Dog kennels...

How does a puppy become a Guide Dog?



2

At 8 weeks old, they go to live with volunteer Puppy Raisers to learn good manners and explore the world ...



Each dog is matched with a person who is blind. They learn all about traveling safely together.



5

My dog sees and leads, I direct and praise. We make a great team!"



Guide Dogs
FOR THE BLIND

How should you interact with someone who is blind?

Treat people who are blind just as you would anyone else. They do not need special treatment. They do not need to be pitied. They do not need to be protected. They do not need to be treated differently.

They are just people who are blind.

They are just people who are blind.

They are just people who are blind.

They are just people who are blind.

They are just people who are blind.

They are just people who are blind.

They are just people who are blind.

They are just people who are blind.

They are just people who are blind.

They are just people who are blind.

How we see

Vision depends on light. A healthy eye receives light, reflected from the surface of objects, through the transparent cornea. The lens then precisely focuses it on a layer of light-sensitive cells called the retina. The image—a pattern of light and dark—is converted into electrical

impulses sent along the optic nerve to the brain, where "seeing" actually takes place.

Blindness isn't always total blackness. More often it's peripheral, tunnel or blurred/spotted vision.



Tunnel Vision:

Diseases or injuries affecting the retina will obstruct the peripheral field of vision. **glaucoma** and **retinitis pigmentosa** are two common diseases that can result in tunnel vision.

Spotted/Blurred Vision:

Various conditions (**diabetic retinopathy**, **detached retinas**, **injuries**, **retinopathy of prematurity**, etc.) can affect the entire field of vision, producing spotted, blurred or double vision.



The quick
brown
fox
jumped
over
the lazy dog

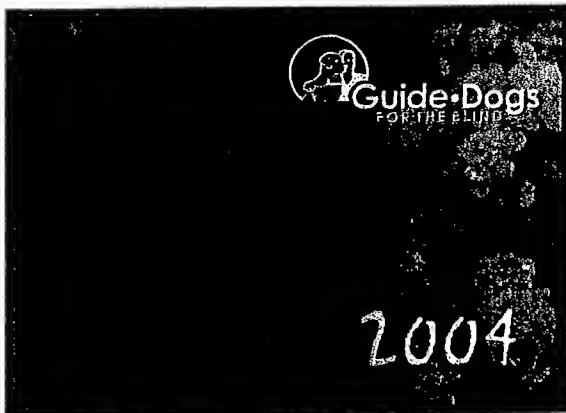
Peripheral Vision:

Loss of central vision is caused by damage to the macula (a tiny and extremely light-sensitive part of the retina that provides color and fine detail). **Macular degeneration** is one of the leading causes of this type of blindness.

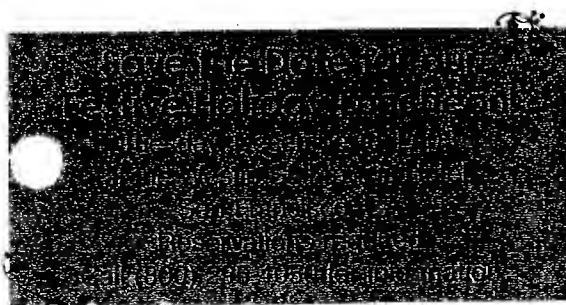


Gift Items Galore!

Get set to shop 'til you drop! Our enclosed Mail Order Catalog has items for everyone on your list—whether it's our adorable holiday card or the gorgeous 2004 wall calendar (both pictured below), these one-of-a-kind gift items are sure to please.



And, coming this Fall: a new online Gift Shop! The e-store will feature several of our most popular items, plus plenty of new gift choices available exclusively online. Items will include stylish new clothing articles such as jackets, shirts and knit caps; unique pet care products like a sporty travel food bowl set, and original gift merchandise like a talking clock/picture frame. Check www.guidedogs.com in October for details!



Pointers from the Veterinarian: *Waging war on fleas*

We're finally beginning to win the war against fleas! Ten years ago, flea control consisted of throwing everything but the kitchen sink at the flea: foggers, house sprays, yard sprays (even car sprays!), baths, dips, powders and more. Sometimes, it was hard to know who was winning the battle! These products were all pesticides used monthly—sometimes weekly—in a vain attempt to kill the fleas, eggs and larvae. Today, with the development of safe, effective, long-lasting topical products, it is much easier to control fleas and it's better for the environment as well.

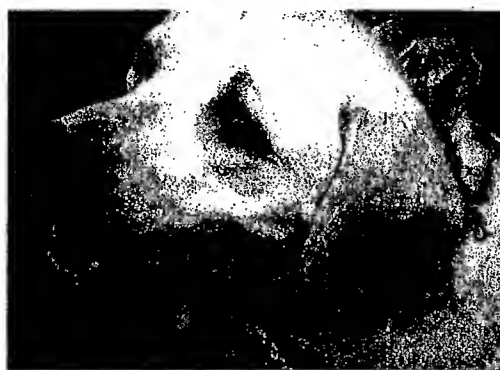
For effective flea control, it is important to first have an understanding of the flea's life cycle. A flea will feed on a dog and lay hundreds of eggs, which then fall off into the environment. A flea egg is a very hardy package, able to withstand environmental extremes for months, only to hatch when the right temperature and humidity are present. This ability to "hibernate" makes complete flea extermination almost impossible. Even though the complete life cycle of a flea can be as short as 21 days, the adult female flea can produce hundreds of eggs in her lifetime under optimum conditions. Preventing the eggs from becoming adults by interrupting the molting cycle reduces the number of adults that attack the dog. It is only the adult flea that actually bites the host animal to feed on its blood. The host animal can be any warmblooded creature from dog to human.

The first revolution in flea control came with a product called Program®. This pill contains a drug called lufenuron and is given once a month. It is very safe for dogs, but when ingested, circulates in their bloodstream for a month at low levels. When an adult

female flea bites the dog, the flea ingests a small amount of the drug into its system. Its reproductive capabilities are shut down, and it is thereafter unable to lay viable eggs. The process is essentially like flea birth control. The drawback with Program is that it doesn't actually kill fleas, and a female flea must bite the dog for the control to be effective. Dogs with flea allergies will still have skin itchiness and other skin problems, and

dog owners still have to do something about the adult fleas in the house and environment.

More recently, there have been advances in topical flea control products. Most notable are Advantage® and Frontline® Revolution®.



Keep your dog happy and flea free!

They work in similar ways: they're placed on the animal once-a-month and kill any fleas that come in contact with the product. They are so effective, that no other flea control is necessary. The entire contents of a tube is squeezed onto the dog's skin behind the shoulder area. In large dogs, the product can be split into 2-3 smaller parts along the dog's back and base of the tail. It's not necessary to spread it all over the dog's body; it will spread itself as the animal moves along the skin.

These products are very safe to use. A possible, but rare, side effect is a minor drying and irritating reaction in the skin at the site of placement. The dog should not be bathed or allowed to swim 2-3 days before and after placement of the products to allow for full effectiveness. Frontline and Revolution have the added benefit of killing ticks, and Revolution also serves as a Heartworm preventative.

Now, you can feel armed and confident in the battle against fleas!

—Jeffrey Williams, DVM

Happenings



All Aboard—Fun Day is an event to honor puppy raisers. But what, exactly, do puppy raisers do? Well, for one, they take their pups on field trips to give them positive exposure to the wide, wide world they'll eventually be traveling when they're paired with their blind partners. Above, some 30 Guide Dog puppies from the Los Angeles Southwest Guide Dog Raisers enjoyed a Metro Rail journey from Long Beach to Union Station recently.



Pleased to Meet You! Kids and dogs make a great combination, but when the kids have vision loss and the dogs are from Guide Dogs, the meeting takes on a new meaning. Earlier this summer, our dogs paid a visit to blind children at Enchanted Hills Camp in Napa, Calif. (top). In addition, Guide Dogs recently hosted a barbeque for children and the families who are associated with the Blind Babies Foundation in San Francisco (left). The encounters gave the kids a glimpse of a future when they could be paired with their very own canine mobility partners.

News of Our Graduates

❖ Puppy Raisers in Carson City, Nev., did some cultural time traveling recently. They visited Old West Camp Rendezvous where graduate Jack (a.k.a. "Blind Dog") Middleton, with German Shepherd guide "Gossett," was camped for a few days in the style of the western explorer (complete with costume dress circa 1840—see his photo at www.guidedogs.com under "Guide Dog News: News of Our Graduates"). The group also came face to face with mountain men carrying black powder rifles, watched "Civil War soldiers" engage in "battle" and even met a camel. Yes—a camel!

❖ Black Lab "Barley" looked pretty cute in his blue cap and cape that match the cap and gown worn by his partner Stephanie Salaz of Anaheim, Calif., as the duo graduated from Cypress College in Cypress, Calif., recently. It was a proud moment for all.

❖ Nashville resident Beverly Faulkner, with yellow Lab "Diva," brought wags and good wishes to the four disabled disadvantaged children she sponsors through the Christian Children's Fund during a recent visit to Texas and Oklahoma by bus. In addition to



"Hopp-On-The-Bus!" is the favorite rallying cry for our students as they play tourist on a Sunday excursion during their class training. Here Erika Wolf, Donald Harlin and Victoria Herrera pose for a photo on the Golden Gate Bridge. Guide Dog volunteers are the designated drivers for the field trips.



Mei Ling Wong and Sharon Zenger, both of Aloha, Wash., relax with their German Shepherd guides, "Albee" and "Kistler," at the Oregon Fun Day.

providing the children with her love, attention, clothing and other necessities, she shared her philosophy: "My motto is I have a disability, but I'm not disabled. I live partially sighted, but I don't live blind," she said.

❖ In Fargo, N.D., Carey McWilliams' black Lab guide, "Delbert," has trouble keeping his partner's feet on the ground! You can read about Carey's skydiving exploits at www.guidedogs.com under "Our Graduates: In Our Own Words."

❖ Joel Jeffries was headed home with his yellow Lab guide "Gibbs" when the bus they were riding caught on fire right in the middle of I-235 in Des Moines. "Gibbs" got him off the bus and over to the guard-rail safely. Joel was delighted that "Gibbs" had taken it all in stride, even though he could undoubtedly smell the smoke.

❖ Grad Bill Landis, with yellow lab "Kinney," were featured in an article in the November issue of the *San Luis Obispo County Journal* (Calif.). The article talked about his advocacy work and life with both "Kinney" and his wife Vicki. ■

Guide Dog Gift Annuities

Increase your income AND make a meaningful gift to our dogs and puppies

- Lock in a guaranteed lifetime income
- Save capital gains and income taxes
- Support our canine heroes!

BENEFITS WHEN YOU DONATE \$10,000 FOR A GIFT ANNUITY

Age	Annual Income*	Tax Deduction
70	\$ 670	\$3,397
80	\$ 830	\$4,497
90	\$1,150	\$5,537

*Plus, a portion of this is tax-free

How would a charitable gift annuity work for me?

(Minimums: age 50, \$5,000 gift)

My birthdate: _____ My spouse's birthdate: _____

Sample gift amount:

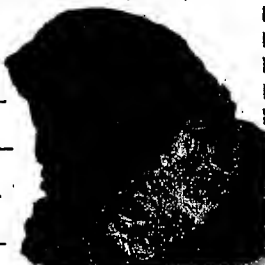
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Return to Tom Horton, director of planned giving
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TO: Michelle Julene, Environmental Specialist
Sonoma County Regional Parks Dept. 579-8247

page 1 of 3

FROM: Arthur W. Casulli
PO Box 1123
Sebastopol, CA 95473

10/9/03

I am writing this letter to express my opposition to an off leash dog park in Ragle Regional Park.

There has already been a history of special interest incursions into the natural and wild spaces of the park. An ever increasing number of soccer fields, the Gravenstein Apple Festival (the annual mowing down of acres of wild grassland and turning them into a parking lot), and recently an expansion and overzealous paving over of wild grassland for a Veteran's Memorial.

Although this park seems to offer a large amount of acreage, such as along the blackberry trail, it is only usable during the dry months of the year. From approximately November to May it is marshland and mud. Therefore the only useable areas for those who seek the quiet and beauty of wildflowers, grass covered hills and oak woodland are the very areas that have been proposed for use by the proponents of the dog park.

As you know Ragle Park is a small regional park on the edge of Sebastopol. The only real public access nature sanctuary near the city limits. There are soccer fields, baseball fields, tennis courts, a volleyball court, group picnic areas, a peace park and hiking trails. It is used daily by folks on horseback, trail bikes, walkers and joggers - Old folks, young folks, disabled folks, etc.

Large groups use the picnic areas regularly and during certain seasons the front end of the park is overrun with soccer leagues and baseball leagues. The park teems with players their families and friends - the parking lots are full and the adjacent off street parking is also. (I have walked in this park for years; I've seen this scene unfolding on a regular basis).

Within the closer area of the park bordered by the paved roads there are areas that are untouched by these activities - graceful natural gentle sloping hillsides and meadows, rich with wild grasses, wildflowers, birds and old trees. Here is where those who can't

navigate the longer distance out around blackberry trail can go for their quiet and peaceful connection with nature, and as stated earlier in the rainy season the only places to walk that aren't paved.

To fence off these areas and designate them for use by packs of running dogs, is questionable for several reasons:

- Once the word is out people will flock there in great numbers with their dogs – where will all these people park?
- Imagine 100's perhaps 1000's of dogs running in the same area over time urinating and defecating – imagine the horrific smell that will develop there (even if people scoop up the poop, the urine remains).
- Some dogs don't socialize well (even though their owners think they will) and there will be injuries – who is liable?
- Some people just won't be responsible and clean up after their dogs – as is already evidenced by the droppings left along the trails)
- The juxtaposition of an established Peace Garden site (silence and natural views) and an off leash dog park doesn't make any sense.
- What will happen to all the wildflowers and animals that inhabit these areas when wolf and fox descendants take over their home? They will all be continuously trampled under, and not be able to recover while being used in this way. There will be erosion from the wearing away of the natural flora ground cover. What impact will this have on neighboring vintage trees?
- The oak covered areas are some of the only shaded areas available for people in the front end of the park.
- The fencing will ruin the aesthetic views of natural habitat and restrict the free movement of wildlife.

If an off leash dog park is not allowed people still have the option to take themselves and their dog companions on a leash out for a walk on the trails –good exercise for both. This proposed park is neither necessary nor needed.

I have a friend who is disabled, who comes to the park daily to stretch and breathe and be in nature – this is part of her healing process, an invaluable place for the nourishment of her spirit through the beauty of the grasses, wildflowers, birds and trees unaltered by humans or domesticated animals. She is one of many. To fence off these beautiful areas and add more congestion to this already overtaxed small regional park is a questionable idea at best.

I love dogs and am a dog owner – however – I urge you to recommend against any dog park in Ragle.

Sincerely,

Arthur W. Caselli

SE

Comments on Proposed off Leash Dog Area

From I believe that putting a dog Park in Ragle Ranch Regional Park would seriously erode the quality of experiences that people have in the Park. I think that dog parks in general are a good idea. They provide space for dogs and dog owners to have quality experiences away from people that are enjoying other activities, and may not necessarily enjoy being around dogs.

Below are my comments on each of the alternative sites proposed for the dog use area in Ragle Ranch Regional Park.

1&2. I believe these would be poor choices. My main objection would be that the dog and dog owner traffic would be disruptive to the picnickers and children using the play area. Also, that open Oak area is beautiful for just walking around in. It is a very peaceful spot, and the presence of dogs in that very central area would change the whole Feel of the Park. The dog traffic would kill the wildflower seeds and possibly damage the roots of the oak trees.

4. This would be an even worse choice. The dog traffic problems from the parking area through the picnic area and playground area would be the same as 1 and 2. There are some very nice trees in that area. And the dog traffic would be crossing the paved trail that many people use as their fitness walk.

5. In some ways this is not a bad choice. The parking area is right next to the dog Park, leaving little disturbance for people that don't necessarily want to be around dogs. And it probably isn't significant as a wildlife area. However, it is right next to the peace garden. It seems like a poor match.

6. I believe this is a very bad choice. This is a great spot for wildlife. And once people are on the blackberry Trail they expect a more peaceful wildlife or contemplative type experience than in the picnic areas or sports fields.

3. This is probably the best of the proposed choices. The dog walkers could get to the dog Park without going through picnickers or beautiful open Oak Woodland. However, there would be some disturbance to people using the fitness trail.

I'm not sure why the Park needs five soccer fields. It seems as though either soccer field number 1 or soccer field number 5 could be sacrificed for the purposes of the dog use area. Both of these sites are already cleared, flat, and of absolutely no value to wildlife. Both of the sites are next to parking areas, so dogs and dog owners could get to the sites without disturbing picnickers, children, fitness trail users, peace garden users, or people just wanting a quality outdoor experience without having to use a lot of natural resources to drive a long distance from the town. And the Park would still have 4 soccer fields.

If people find sacrificing one soccer field offensive, then consider the alternative of using the proposed site across from the community center on Morris St.

I am a citizen of Sebastopol and I use Ragle Ranch Regional Park regularly. I normally use the blackberry Trail and do a nice loop. I watch birds along the way. I'm a professional ornithologist and the habitat at Ragle Park is very good and should be appreciated for that. It is uncommon for a community to have such an intact natural area within city boundaries. Of some significance, is a remnant population of California Thrasher that lives in the blackberry brambles under the large Oaks between the paved loop path and the group picnic area. Dog park site proposals 1, 2, and 4 would seriously impact that little habitat there.

On another note, we like to think that people walk on nature trails or the fitness trails, but some people cannot use either. Last summer, I was very ill and could only walk short distances and walking on pavement hurt my legs. I was afraid to walk on the paths because if I got too far away from the car, I could not walk back. I used the area around the group picnic area and dog Park proposal sites 1 and 2 for daily walking. I could not have done this if there were dog parks there.

Think you for listening,

Sincerely,

Lisa Hug

Lisa Hug

Ragle Ranch Regional Park
PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

Name: Lisa Hug
Address: 587 N Main St, Sebastopol, CA 95472
e-mail: Lisa.hug@earthlink.net

Are you on the mailing list already? ☐ yes ☒ no **NOTE: The mailing list is public information**

Comments: see attached



Ragle Ranch Regional Park

PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

Name: Lynn Stewart
 Address: 8711 Barnett Valley Rd., Sebastopol 95472
 e-mail: StewartL@sonic.net

Are you on the mailing list already? ☐ yes ☒ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: I strongly support an off-leash dog area at Ragle Park. The park is already a multi-use area for the community for athletics, picnics, dog-walking, exercise, etc. An area for dogs off-leash will be another positive drawing point for the community. In addition, it might help to protect the natural area and trails on the west side of the park where some people allow their dogs to run free.



Ragle Ranch Regional Park

PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

Name: Kathy Wilder
 Address: 2126 Longhorn Cir Santa Rosa, CA 95401
 e-mail: islandnutz@aol.com

Are you on the mailing list already? ☒ yes ☐ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: I use dog parks almost everyday. I have wonderful times there, so does my dog. It's way past time (and money) that Sebastopol have a dog park. Public parks are just that they are for everyone, not just for people who like flowers and not just for kids. I pay taxes and want something I can enjoy, that is a dog park. I have followed this saga for over a year. Let's get this done! It won't brain surgery, just a dog park! Thank you,



Ragle Ranch Regional Park

PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

Name: Lena Sell
 Address: 491 Nansen Lane, Sebastopol CA 95472
 e-mail: lesells

Are you one the mailing list already? ☐ yes ☒ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: As a property owner in the neighbor hood of Ragle Park - I am totally in favor of a dog park. Many many residents enjoy walking their dogs. An off leash area would enable dogs who live on small lots to get adequate exercise and socialization. It also would limit off leash activity in prohibited areas. I agree with the comment - "Ragle is a huge park and can be enjoyed by all". My choice would be the site which will least impact children & other visitors. I would also like to see the park administrators look into using the small soccer field that was suggested at the meeting.

Thank You



Ragle Ranch Regional Park

PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

Name: Terry Garner
 Address: 7300 Lynch Rd Sebastopol CA 95472
 e-mail: terry.garner@att.net

Are you one the mailing list already? ☐ yes ☒ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: I fully support an off leash dog area in Ragle Park. Dog owners, for the most part, recognize a dog park to be a privilege extended by the greater community and respect the rules. The off-leash area would protect wildlife and other environmental concerns by designating a place for dogs to exercise in the park.
After the excellent review and report by Parks & Rec. I support sites 2 and 4 as representing the least environmental and public impact.
Also I would like to note that the Parks & Rec should consider allowing any overseeing group for the dog park such as Sebastopol Dog Park Group to consider low impact gravel or bark to provide ground cover in the site area



Ragle Ranch Regional Park

PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

Name:

Gail Atkins + Bob Mugar

Address:

8450 Kennedy Rd., Sebastopol CA 95772

e-mail:

gatkings@rcfb.org

Are you on the mailing list already? ☐ yes ☒ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments:

Thank-you for moderating the meeting.
We would be happy with any of the
sites except #3 by the tennis court because
it's too narrow and too close to the softball field.

Also #4 would be fine unless it gets flooded
in the winter.

We especially liked #2 5 or 6 unless

archeological studies would hold it up for too long.

Good luck, you'll need it. Gail + Bob



Ragle Ranch Regional Park

PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

Name:

Kim Sturm

Address:

8129 Valentine Avenue, Sebastopol, CA 95472

e-mail:

kims@sonic.net

Are you on the mailing list already? ☐ yes ☒ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments:

I am for the off-leash dog park. I
feel it should be kept away from the
Peace Garden for quiet's sake. Otherwise I
hope the spot chosen has the least impact
on natural habitat.



Ragle Ranch Regional Park

PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

Name:

YOLANDA WOOD

Address:

8840 BODEGA HWY. SEBASTOPOL CA 95472

e-mail:

Are you on the mailing list already? ☒ yes

☐ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments:

IF THE UNFORTUNATE DECISION IS MADE TO IMPOSE
DOG PARK IN RAGLE RANCH PARK, SITE #3. NEAR THE TENNIS
COURTS SHOULD BE THE ONLY CHOICE FOR THESE REASONS
1 EASY ACCESS FOR SENIORS AND THE HANDICAPPED.
2 LENGTH OF SITE ALLOWS FOR DOGS TO RUN
3 DOG URINE AND FECES WOULD NOT DRAIN TO ATASCANERO CREEK
4 BARKING WOULD BE LESS OBVIOUS WITH STREET AND ATHLETIC
FIELD NOISES.
5 WILDLIFE WOULD BE LESS IMPACTED.
6 VISUAL EYESORE OF 4 FT. CHAINLINK FENCING
WOULD BE LESS IN TENNIS COURT AREA.



Ragle Ranch Regional Park PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

Name: Laurie Horn
Address: 539 DuFranc Avenue, Sebastopol, Calif 95472
e-mail: _____

Are you on the mailing list already? ☒ yes ☐ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: I oppose the proposal of any dog park at Ragle Park. I am 83 years old and have enjoyed walking at the park for many years. I feel the introduction of dogs an off-leash dog area in any of the proposed sites would create a safety issue for both young and old, would drive away the owls, squirrels, and quail, and change the peaceful atmosphere of the park. Please do not allow this to happen. The regional parks were not meant to be used in this manner. Dogs can be very disruptive - especially in an enclosed area. Tennis players, Peace Park folks, veterans, and children playing sports do should not have to deal with this!

Ragle Ranch Regional Park PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

Name: ANDREE MACCOLL
Address: 950 FERGUSON Rd., SEBASTOPOL 95472
e-mail: andimcoll@aol.com

Are you on the mailing list already? ☒ yes ☐ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: I WAS INVOLVED WITH A DOG PARK IN LOS ANGELES - REGARDLESS OF THE CAREFUL PLANNING THAT WENT INTO IT, THE RESULT WAS ENDLESS DOG FIGHTS (AND PEOPLE FIGHTS), CHILDREN & ADULTS BEING BITTEN, AND, THE INEVITABLE LAWSUITS. I SEE NO REASON FOR THERE TO BE A DOG PARK IN RAGLE. THE DOG OWNERS WHO WALK THEIR DOGS THERE (ON LEAD) DON'T WANT IT, THE WALKERS (ME, AMONG THEM) DON'T WANT IT, SO EXACTLY WHO DOES WANT IT? I THINK A SMALL GROUP OF PEOPLE WITH A LITTLE POLITICAL CLOUT LOVE THE IDEA (ARE THOSE THE SAME PEOPLE WHO LET THEIR DOGS BARK WHEN THEY'RE NOT HOME? OR EVEN WHEN THEY ARE?) THIS IS NOT SOMETHING I WANT TO SEE AT RAGLE PARK. I CAN THINK OF BETTER WAYS TO SPEND MONEY. I WILL NOT RENEW MY PASS, NOR BE A USER OF THE PARK, IF THIS DOG PARK BECOMES A REALITY.



Ragle Ranch Regional Park PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

Name: LAURALEE AHO
Address: 7433 HUNTLEY ST SEBASTOPOL 95472
e-mail: laho@alleycat.net.com

Are you on the mailing list already? ☐ yes ☒ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: I DO NOT SUPPORT THE PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA IN RAGLE PARK FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

* THE SMELL OF THE DOGS (INCLUDING THEIR URINE AND FECAL MATTER) WOULD BE INTRUSIVE TO THE PEOPLE ENJOYING THE PARK.

* THE PRESENCE OF MANY DOGS WILL UPSET THE AMBIENCE AND ECOSYSTEM OF THE PARK.

* THE PRESENCE OF DOGS MAY CREATE AN UNSAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE MANY CHILDREN THAT UTILIZE THE PARK.

Ragle Ranch Regional Park PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

Name: PHYLLIS WERLIN
Address: 7777 BADEGA AVE, P-2, SEBASTOPOL, CA 95472
e-mail: _____

Are you on the mailing list already? ☒ yes ☐ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: I've lived in and enjoyed Sebastopol for the past 7 years. I walk in the park sometimes on a daily basis. I've purchased a Park Pass for 30 4 years now, and basically live it for Ragle. During the past couple of years the noise level, cars, and activity in general has intruded on my peaceful times spent in the park. The park has helped me maintain a sense of wonder at its beauty - and the quiet helps us through what is becoming more and more a stressful world (for many reasons I love animals, own or am owned by a cat have had dogs before and deeply loved them. However because of all the other people-activity in the park, recently - I oppose a dog park. Please consider our needs to walk and exercise in a peaceful area we deeply love, and find another spot for a dog area.

Thank you for reading my comments - Phyllis Werlin



Ragle Ranch Regional Park

PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

Name: Mary Killian
Address: 349 Jesse St, Sebastopol
e-mail: marykil@pacbell.net

Are you on the mailing list already? ☐ yes ☒ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: The area under and around the oaks at Ragle Ranch Regional Park is a rich native plant habitat and should not be used for a dog run. That would destroy the balance of the ecosystem there. I walk frequently at the park, and understand that the "General Plan" designated this as an 'educational' area. This is perfect. As home of a dwindling bird population of the California Thrasher, and annual displays of numerous genera of native wildflowers, this area is serving a very important function. Please do not allow it to be destroyed as a dog run. Please create a dog run somewhere that has already been transitioned to artificial habitat, such as the lawn area near the Sebastopol Community Center. Thank you for your attention.
Mary Killian

Ragle Ranch Regional Park

PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

Name: JANIS G. TAYLOR
Address: 7575 BATELY COURT #1, SEBASTOPOL, CA 95472
e-mail: _____

Are you on the mailing list already? ☒ yes ☐ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: I do not want to see any area of Ragle Park used for an off-leash dog area. The presence of fencing would mar the beauty of the park and destroy the plants in the area and the wild life that inhabit those areas. I don't think dogs should be off-leash in any public space and while most dog owners are considerate, there are those who will not clean up after their dogs and I don't want that to happen in Ragle Park. I also don't want barking dogs to create deter from the peacefulness of the park.

Ragle Ranch Regional Park
PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

Name: JOHN + MARY ANN GOMME
Address: 1360 JONUE RD, SEBASTOPOL, CA 95473
e-mail: NO

Are you on the mailing list already? ☐ yes ☒ no NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: Beautiful Ragle Ranch Park is for people accompanied if they wish, by dogs on leashes. We would prefer the park be maintained this way for the foreseeable future + we are against the off-leash dog area in Ragle Ranch Park.



Ragle Ranch Regional Park
PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

Name: TAMARA MORROW
Address: 8034 WASHINGTON AVE SEBASTOPOL CA 95472
e-mail:

Are you on the mailing list already? ☐ yes ☒ no NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: I'm a local resident of 32 years in Sebastopol. I strongly oppose the development of a dog park anywhere within the park area. I walk + run there on a daily basis. There are so few untouched, natural spaces left in Sonoma County. Please do not "cityfy" the rest of the park + destroy the natural beauty, the quiet, + the homes of the wild creatures there. I know many others who appreciate having a place of peace to walk in. The development would affect the biological + environmental balance. The clearing + paving that has already taken place is a crime + saddens me more than I can express. Please have a heart +



Ragle Ranch Regional Park

PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

Name:

Phil Van Soelen

Address:

1560 Brittain Ave Sebastopol CA 95472

e-mail:

PhilVans at Sonic.net

Are you on the mailing list already? ☐ yes

☒ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments:

I object to Ragle Ranch Park being developed and partitioned off for a special interest group.

The remaining meadows should be left undeveloped or when appropriate should be replanted with native oaks.

A fenced Dog Area is inappropriate and conflicts with other's enjoyment of nature.

Thank you Phil Van Soelen



Ragle Ranch Regional Park

PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

Name:

KAREN HUGULEY

Address:

965 PLEASANT HILL RD. - SEBASTOPOL (823-4067)

e-mail:

~~the~~ karen.huguley@juno.com

Are you on the mailing list already? ☒ yes(?) ☐ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments:

I am opposed to the creating of an off-leash dog area in Ragle Park. While I am a dog owner, I do not believe I would use such an area for several reasons. First, the area would be taken away from the resident wildlife, unless the area chosen is part of the "multi-use soccer little league field". Second, most of the areas under discussion are otherwise seldom disturbed and I and many others who visit the park every day would lose our rights to a quiet enjoyment of what is, after all, our park. We see wildlife here all the time, without having to go to the swampy lowlands (in winter) or disrupt the areas being rehabilitated. It seems the park is being chopped up and changed, bit by little from a place of enjoying the natural beauty of the area to a place fragmented into special interest plots.

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Ragle Ranch Regional Park

PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

Name: John + Rosemarie Spillane
 Address: 780 High St. Sebastopol CA 95472
 e-mail: _____

Are you on the mailing list already? ☐ yes ☐ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: We have discussed this problem, and we agree with our friend, Dagmar Heimann, that the area marked #6, which is nearly as big as #1 would not interfere with the beauty of the park, would still be large but out of the way of so many of us who enjoy the many uses of the park. How many dog owners would daily use this area, and how much noise might quarreling dogs make?

John Terence Spillane



Ragle Ranch Regional Park

PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

Name: DAGMAR HEIMANN
 Address: 5178 FAIRBANKS RD, SEBASTOPOL CA 95472
 e-mail: _____

Are you on the mailing list already? ☐ yes ☒ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: I Am very much opposed to the off-leash dog area on the 1 acre site (#1) since it is right in the middle of the most beautiful wild-flower meadow & directly next to the loop path that many people enjoy for their daily walk (I am being one of them). I love dogs and welcome the idea of an off-leash area that will give them a place to run w/o leash. My suggestion is to use the 0.8 acre site (#6) below the peace garden. It's the 2nd largest and does not interfere with most every other activity most people enjoy.



Ragle Ranch Regional Park PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

Name: Priscilla Griffith
Address: 1015 Furlong Rd Sebastopol Ca 95972
e-mail: _____

Are you on the mailing list already? ☐ yes ☒ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments:

I would support #3 or #4 sites
for the off leash area.

I would NOT support 1 or 2.

Priscilla Griffith

Ragle Ranch Regional Park PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

Name: MONICA HARRIS
Address: 7771 Healdsburg Ave #29, Sebastopol
e-mail: _____

Are you on the mailing list already? ☒ yes ☐ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: It is my understanding that there is a
petition w/ my signature on it saying that
I oppose a dog park in Ragle Park. That
isn't what I signed & if it says that,
Arlene Kellen misrepresents the petition
to me.

I am definitely in favor of a park area
for dogs, just not in the area proposed.
One of the soccer fields is an idea
spot, in my opinion, as there are plenty
of them to go around.

Monica Harris



Ragle Ranch Regional Park
PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

Name: A. J. Wood
Address: 8840 BODEGA Hwy, SEBASTOPOL, CA 95472
e-mail: _____

Are you on the mailing list already? ☒ yes ☐ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: Site #3 nearest the street is the only
dog park that results in minimal damage
to the environment. All the others create
sensory and physical pollution with long term
effects on trees, native plants, creek watershed,
and wildlife.

Do not be responsible for the wrong
decision. Nature is slow to forgive.

Ragle Ranch Regional Park
PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

Name: Marsha Sue Lustig
Address: 7438 Calder Ave, Sebastopol
e-mail: sebastopolgang@msn.com

OCT 7 - 2003

REGIONAL PARKS DEPT
COUNTY OF SONOMA

Are you on the mailing list already? yes no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments:

I have reviewed the alternatives and while I do not feel that a
dog park is necessary I believe the only VIABLE alternative is
#3. #3 will not require a long path to be constructed nor will
it degrade existing habitat or wetlands or area utilized for
large social gatherings of humans.

Please remember that just because you studied it doesn't
mean you must find an approvable option. ~~this year~~

Thank you, Marsha Sue Lustig



Ragle Ranch Regional Park

PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

RECEIVED

OCT 7 - 2003

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

Name:

Jody Tucker

Address:

708 Gravenstein Hwy N. #289 Sebastopol

e-mail:

jodytuck@sonic.net

Are you on the mailing list already? ☐ yes ☒ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments:

I prefer the site by the tennis courts - It's the only one that doesn't seem intrusive. (You did a great job last week!)
Thanks!



Ragle Ranch Regional Park

PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

RECEIVED

OCT 7 - 2003

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

Name:

Karen Hollister

Address:

840 Bloomfield Rd Sebastopol Ca 95472

e-mail:

khollis840@aol.com

Are you on the mailing list already? ☒ yes ☐ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments:

I think the site closest to The Peace Park would work the best of all the sites I saw at the public meeting. it needs to be larger tho!

Best would be soccer field that isn't used that much

I want to come 2x a day 7 days a week for a quick social visit for my dogs and then a walk for us on leash around the park. A park would be near, one doesn't need that much room to socialize + I would really be exercising them on the walk. the dog park is a must for it + for her mom + reduces the # of "Bad" dogs!



Ragle Ranch Regional Park

PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

RECEIVED

OCT 7 - 2003

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

REGIONAL PARKS DEPT
COUNTY OF SONOMA

Name: LINDA ROA
Address: 805 Norlee St, Sebastopol, CA 95472
e-mail: roa@sonic.net

Are you on the mailing list already? ☐ yes ☒ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: Living close to Ragle Ranch Park, I do walk
around the park. I've seen the alternative off-leash
area locations & want to put my vote in for AREA 5.
It is a good sized parcel, readily accessible to
walkers as well as those who drive in.
I feel very strongly that the meadow areas (location
1 & 2) should be marked off. The beauty of those open
spaces surrounded by oaks would be lost
if invaded by chain-link fencing there.
Areas 3 & 4 are considerably smaller & area 6
a bit far away.
Please consider AREA 5.

Linda Roa

Ragle Ranch Regional Park

PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

RECEIVED

OCT 7 - 2003

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

REGIONAL PARKS DEPT
COUNTY OF SONOMA

Name: Karla Fittipaldi
Address: 453 Ragle Rd. Sebastopol 95472
e-mail: 3 kfittipaldi@earthlink.net

Are you on the mailing list already? yes ☒ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: I am a dog owner who walks daily in Ragle Park.
I think a dog park is desperately needed in Sebastopol
West County. I would really appreciate a legal
area where my dog can go off leash.
I heard 2 suggestions today - ① unused area between
Brook Haven and Libby park where portables used to be,
② strip of land across from community center.
I am welcome to consider these, but also think
Ragle offers some desirable areas:
2, and # 6. (# 4 appears OK to me, but someone
said it gets muddy - oh well so does a good deal of the
Park during rain season.) Sincerely,

Ragle Ranch Regional Park
PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

Name: _____

Address: _____

e-mail: _____

Mrs. Diana Cesanetti
P.O. Box 955
Forestville, CA 95436

Are you on the mailing list already? ☒ yes ☐ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments:

As a dog owner and a daily worker
at Ragle Park I see no reason to spoil the
life of Ragle Park. We have a number of wild
birds, squirrels, and cottontail rabbits that
live there. Why are we not interested in
are wild life and keeping them safe.
If we must have a dog park do you
best to save our wild life and keep it
away from the people that now use
the park daily.

THANK YOU

Ragle Ranch Regional Park
PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

RECEIVED

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

Name: LORETTA J. MORTON

Address: 6710 BARBARA DR SEBASTOPOL, CA 95772

e-mail: E-L-MORTON@WEBTV.NET

REGIONAL PARKS DEPT
COUNTY OF SONOMA

Are you on the mailing list already? ☒ yes ☐ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: I am in favor of site #5 or #6. As a person walks from
the tennis courts down the gently sloping path to the paved
loop path you can feel the noises of the town fade away.
You have a feeling of quiet and peace. Bird sounds are all
around.

The sites #1, #2, #3, #4 would possibly ruin the tranquil
atmosphere. These sites would also split the park. Dogs barking
along with owners of the dogs would ruin the peaceful
silence many people who now walk the park enjoy.

Site #6 is more proper in my opinion. Parking and
bathroom facilities are nearby.
Please do not ruin the quiet and peaceful atmosphere
that we are so fortunate to possess now.



Ragle Ranch Regional Park

PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

Name:

Jewel Robbins

Address:

7237 Maple Avenue Sebastopol CA 95472

e-mail:

Kishmirian@aol.com

Are you one the mailing list already? ☐ yes

☒ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments:

I strongly oppose siting the Dog Park in the proposed areas 1, 2 or 4.

Wildness, a feeling of safety and accessibility make a very rare and valuable combination within and around the paved lo path. I paint landscapes, play games with my children, take elderly friends on walks while feeling a part of natu restored and safe in this area.

A dog park within/near this area will take away from the restorative quality and last vestige of wildness of this area.

PLEASE FIND THE WISDOM TO SITE THE DOG PARK ELSEWHERE.

Thank you, Jewel Robbins



Ragle Ranch Regional Park

PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

Name:

Mrs. May Cantwell

Address:

280 Frankel Lane, Sebastopol, Calif. 95472

e-mail:

Are you one the mailing list already? ☐ yes

☒ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: I live within four blocks of Ragle Ranch Park. I walk my small dog frequently. If there is a Off-Leach Dog Area I will not allow my dog to use it. I bought a small dog because I had a small backyard. If you decide to put this area in the park, I suggest that area #4 would be a good choice. My concern is those dog owners who do not clean up after their pet has relieved himself. (This is already evident in the par I absolutely would object to area #1, #2, #3 and #5. I enjoy the wild flowers in the spring very much, especially in area #1 and #2. We lost one area when they put in the soft-ball field. We have so few open spaces I would hope that you preserve what we have in the park.

Sincerely,

May Cantwell



Ragle Ranch Regional Park

PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

Name: NIKOS NAJARIAN
Address: 357 NEVA ST SEBRASTOOL
e-mail: _____

Are you on the mailing list already? ☐ yes ☒ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: I am writing to protest the
proposed dog park for Ragle Ranch Regional
Park. The Park is already developed -
used beyond its capacity to sustain a
sensible or protective approach is needed
to take care of the open oak meadow
and the many species who are so very
threatened by the addition of an invasive
and destructive dog park. This simply
is not the place for dog owners to exercise
their animals & blatantly trample & destroy
natural conditions. Please do not let
this happen. Thank you

Ragle Ranch Regional Park

PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

Name: Andrea Austin
Address: POB 1102 OCCIDENTAL CA 95465
e-mail: _____

Are you on the mailing list already? ☐ yes ☒ no

NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments: I have just become aware of the proposed
OFF-LEASH dog area in Ragle Park. The area in question
is one of the nicer spots in the park. Why would you consider
ruining it by leasing it off for dogs. Dogs are already allowed
the park on leashes. As a long-time resident (and dog owner) I
would much prefer to see that area remain a lovely unfenced area.
please use another less prime spot for the dog club.

Ragle Ranch Regional Park
PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

Name: STAFFORD L. KALLEN
Address: COAO VINE AV. SEBASTOPOL 95472
e-mail: _____

Are you on the mailing list already? ☒ yes ☐ no **NOTE: The mailing list is public information**

Comments:

I AM OPPOSED TO "DOG PARK" IN ANY OF THE UN-DEVELOPED AREAS OF RAGLE PARK. THIS PARK HAS SUFFERED FROM TOO MUCH SPECIAL INTEREST "NEEDS". SITE #3 PLACES THIS FENCED AREA IN AN ALREADY DEVELOPED AREA AND IS THEREFORE ACCEPTABLE. THE OTHER SITES VIOLATE THE GENERAL PLAN FOR THE PARK AND WOULD IMPINGE GREATLY ON EXISTING USES OF OPEN, SCENIC + SOMEWHAT NATURAL AREAS. TO TAKE AWAY THESE AREAS FROM THE MANY - INCLUDING DOG WALKERS - FOR THE DESIRES OF A FEW WOULD BE UNFAIR AND WRONG.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.



Ragle Ranch Regional Park
PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department.

Name: MADGELEINE A. SHORE
Address: 404 WATER TROUGH SEBASTOPOL CA 95472
e-mail: mellestho@yahoo.com

Are you on the mailing list already? ☒ yes ☐ no **NOTE: The mailing list is public information**

Comments:

I am opposed to the dog park for the simple reason that I hate to see another part of the park used for that purpose. It is a beautiful park that should stay undisturbed. I walk my dog on a leash every morning as many other people do - I use the upper trails as well as the trail. It is my time to enjoy the beauty provided by "Mother Nature". I get my exercise, so does my dog and it is a beautiful time to observe nature and collect your thoughts. I will feel very sad if I see another part of the park trampled - I am only a voice but I hope it counts.

146 M. Shore

Ragle Ranch Regional Park
PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

Name: Jahna Munrey
Address: 8757 Bower Dr. Silverdale
e-mail: JAHNA@REDJELLYFISH.NET

Are you on the mailing list already? ☐ yes ☒ no **NOTE: The mailing list is public information**

Comments:

I walk at least 4 times a week at Ragle park. I appreciate the leash law & enjoy seeing the dogs & their masters. I also enjoy having open vistas. I am adamantly opposed to having dog fences and I am disappointed in the "Section" that did not ask the walkers how they feel about a fenced dog area. There was no publication or inquiry nor information shared.

Jahna Munrey

Ragle Ranch Regional Park
PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

Name: Patricia Miller
Address: 8683 Mill Station Rd. Sebastopol CA.
e-mail: _____

Are you on the mailing list already? ☒ yes ☐ no **NOTE: The mailing list is public information**

Comments:

I'm a senior citizen, I have been walking in the Ragle Park for over ten years. I'm afraid with a dog park the tranquility I share with my friends will be lost.

The area of alternative #1 (B. Fullat) the meadow has beautiful Oregon & pink mallow and a dog park would cause erosion.

Please if we must have a park for the dogs, place it where there is parking for the cars and not a place where it won't disturb the walkers.

Thank you
Pm

Ragle Ranch Regional Park
PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

Name: MYRTLE GREGORI
Address: 10581 Occidental Rd. Sebastopol, CA 95472
e-mail: _____

Are you on the mailing list already? ☒ yes ☐ no **NOTE: The mailing list is public information**

Comments:

Don't need a dog area, People like to walk their dogs. And lots of them walks in the park. And lots do not clean the mess. Unless, There is a security person watching. Only one I would recommend is site #6

Ragle Ranch Regional Park
PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

Name: Fred Bollinger
Address: 312 Lorraine Ct. Sebastopol Ca 95472
e-mail: _____

Are you on the mailing list already? ☐ yes ☒ no NOTE: The mailing list is public information

Comments:

I am a 87 year old native of Sebastopol and I have been walking in Ragle Ranch Park for 20 years.

I object to the use of the park for a dog park for the following reasons.

1st the soil in the park will not take the dogs running on it. It is very fragile and if they destroy the sod you will have dirt in the summer and mud and erosion in the winter.

2nd There is a group of people I no longer see at the park, namely the bird watchers. I no longer see the following birds and I believe this is the reason.

Loggerhead Shrike, Kingbird, Meadowlark, Grosbeak, Orioles, Purple Finch, American Gold Finch, Killdeer.

There is a covey of 350 quail that feed in and around the Peace Park and I believe they will be endangered as well as other birds.

3 I don't want to see any further damage done to the wild flowers.

Respectfully
Fred.

From: Susan Snow <susan@sonic.net>
To: <parks@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 9/28/03 1:33PM
Subject: Ragle Ranch Park Off-Leash Dog Area

I would like to put in my two cents' worth on the 6 options for the dog runs.

I am against fencing off precious land for dogs in an intensely developed and used park.

However, one of the six is barely acceptable--Option #4. It is on the small side and it is not obtrusive. It is a bit out of the way. It is separate from other activities. Nor does it require any new pathways.

Susan Snow
601 Hetts Lane
823-1635
Daily user of the park

From: "Arlene Kallen" <arlene@sonoma.lib.ca.us>
To: <mjulene@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 9/26/03 6:19PM
Subject: Appreciation

Hi Michele,

Thank you for conducting the scoping session at Ragle yesterday in such a professional way. Your presentation was to the point and you handled the questions and comments in a fair, calm and friendly manner. It seemed to me that the group really appreciated the way you worked to keep the discussions on track.

One idea, can you please send a few copies of both the NOP and the comments postcard to the Park? There are still many who don't go online, and I think that it would be good for the Rangers to be able to just hand people the NOP when they ask about it.

Thank you again,
Arlene Kallen

From: "Jerry Meshulam" <jerrym@sonic.net>
To: <mjulene@sonoma-county.org>, <mjulene@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 10/8/03 11:36AM
Subject: Ragle Ranch dog park: comments

To: Sonoma County Regional Parks

I strongly oppose the creation of a dog park at Ragle Ranch Regional Park. After attending several meetings about the dog park, it is clear that creating it at Ragle Ranch will have significant negative impacts on the intended use of the park. The favorite site of the dog park promoters is the one-acre parcel in the middle of an oak woodland area. This would be disastrous because of the loss of wildlife area, erosion problems and loss of scenic area of the park.

On the evening of the meeting to show the public the various sites, one of the dogs in attendance began to dig in the dirt. After only a few scratches from the dog, a large cloud of powdery, white dust engulfed the crowd. It is staggering to think what this would look like if an acre of land were given over to a dog park.

If there must be a dog park at Ragle, the .25-acre site (not .1 acre as erroneously labeled on the map) near the tennis courts is the least objectionable. While smaller than the other sites, it still allows a dog to run the same length in a straight line as the largest, one-acre site. I suggest the area be turfed to avoid similar erosion problems as the other sites.

I support the creation of a dog park in the west county. I agree that dogs benefit from the socialization afforded by a dog park. However, I can't believe that the dogs care where they're allowed to run. It's the dog park promoters that seem to want to have the dog park at Ragle and likely for the same reason thousands of other people love to be at Ragle Ranch: It's a beautiful location where one feels close to nature and can watch nature's cycles through the seasons.

The dog park promoters should not be allowed to permanently destroy this scenic treasure for their own self-serving use. Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Jerry and Phyllis Meshulam
7450 Fircrest Ave.
Sebastopol, CA 95472

cc: Supervisor Mike Reilly

CC: <mreilly@sonoma-county.org>, <mreilly@sonoma-county.org>

From: <TravelwFriends@aol.com>
To: <mreilly@sonoma-county.org>, <mjulene@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 10/8/03 6:32PM
Subject: Ragle Ranch Park

Dear Mr. Reilly,

We walk in Ragle Ranch Park, and we are dog owners. This park is a gem in our county. We have very few parks with easy access to natural areas. At Ragle, the young and old can enjoy oak trees in their natural meadow setting. In spring, the meadows are alive with lupine and poppies. It seems it should be unnecessary to make an exception to the parks master plan, to piece off habitat to accommodate a dog park. There surely must be a more suitable place in the west county for this land use.

Sites 1 and 2 that are proposed for the fenced off-leash area are in the oak woodland meadows. A fence will break the expanse of beauty. Either fence would be visible from both ends of the meadow. A fence would also restrict the movement of wildlife. A variety of wildlife use this area around the clock. Natural habitat, with easy viewing, is very valuable.

Site 3 is small, but it is already in a developed area. There is enough distance to throw a ball for a dog. Once it is flattened, it could be covered with bark or pea gravel. It wouldn't get so muddy or dusty.

Site 4 is in a natural habitat area. There is no reason it should be disturbed.

Site 5 has many points in it's favor. This area has no native cover. It is close to parking. It has been observed that people that use a dog park don't like to leash their dogs to an off-leash area. There would be plenty of play space for the dogs. It seems that native plants could shield the view of the area from the Peace Garden. If dog owners would agree not to use the off-leash area during ceremonies in the garden, it might work out.

We would be sad to see Site 6 developed. We feel cutting into the undeveloped native area should be avoided. It is sloped, and would be likely to erode when mowed.

Thank you for your attention and concern.

Ann Conger & Kris Palo
2002 Coffee Lane
Sebastopol, CA 95472

From: "Andrew 'A.J.' Levis" <ecocontractor@earthlink.net>
To: <parks@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 10/9/03 2:09AM
Subject: Ragle public Comment

Andrew J. Levis

7986 Washington Ave., Sebastopol, CA 95472

707-829-3619 cel 480-6010 fax 829-3669

to: Michelle Julene, Senior Environmental Specialist, Sonoma
County Regional Parks Department, 2300 County Center Drive, #120A,
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Thank you for the reminder to comment on the Environmental Review in
progress.

This is not only a time for comments, but a time for questions as well.

Dog runs are one of the fastest growing usurpations of public space. Surveys
I've read and taken indicate very few dogs use public dog runs when
available.

My question #1, is what percent of park users will benefit from this dog
run?

Consider the soccer players, hikers, bikers, picnickers, joggers, playground
users, volleyball and tennis players, birdwatchers, etc.

My question #2 is what percent of registered dog owners would use the off
leash dog run at Ragle?

This should be relatively easy to survey by calling a random sampling of say
100 or 10% of registered dog owners in Sebastopol or since it's a county
park, in the County.

I would politely question the perceived 'need' for a dog run at Ragle.

Question #3 is How do you differentiate between a 'need' and a 'desire'?

The vast majority of dog owners can obviously exercise their dogs adequately
on a leash or on their own private property. Proven by the fact; that is
what they do now. Maybe some people acquired a dog and don't have space to
adequately exercise their dog or the ability to walk the dog on a leash.

Question #4: Does this mean the public needs to provide space for these dogs
to run?

Dogs are instinctively aggressive and relentless. And it is the aggressive
relentlessness of a handful of dog owners that have gnawed through barriers
to bring Ragle this close to 'going to the dogs'. Rewarding their effort
could lead to similar hounding tactics until other public agencies succumb
to their demands. I hope you get the idea without my repeating the threats
I've heard about dog doo and running dogs off leash entirely unfenced.

Question #5: Will you evaluate the likelihood that this will lead to more
dog parks in the area?

If the public does not provide space for dogs to run off leash then the
opportunity is greater for a private individual with open space to invite
that activity to these interested parties that have clearly made their
interest known.

Question 6: Will you evaluate the fiscal impact of lost business opportunity
for a privately operated dog park?

Community building is always strengthened by inviting people on to your
property.

Question 7: Can you evaluate the potential benefit of community building
which would occur via dog parks on private land the proposed dog run at
Ragle would eclipse?

The comment period is not only a time to input your personal opinion, but to also refer to specific topics and impacts for potential in depth study.

Question 8: What is the impact of dogs on wildlife in general and squirrels in particular?

Have you ever seen a squirrel burying an acorn? That acorn could grow into one of the magnificent oak trees that we enjoy today.

Question 9:

How will the ecology of the meadow evolve after that squirrels neighborhood is converted to a dog run?

I fear that behind the scene lobbying is heavily favoring alternative one, a most attractive Oak woodland meadow.

I have seen first hand wildlife such as quail and squirrels leave an area after it became intensely used by dogs and the oak woodland has been converted to a dust bowl/mud hole depending on the season.

Alternatives 1,2, and 4 are certainly among the worst possible choices.

Converting Oak woodland to dog run would negatively impact the natural evolution of the ecosystem surviving there.

These pockets of nature are what many people treasure the most in Ragle Park.

These are the very spots where weddings are held, healing massages are given, birthdays are celebrated, New Years are welcomed, trees are climbed, acorns are gathered and buried, blades of grass are rested upon, all on a typical day in the park.

There's been a question raised regarding the size of "the least undesirable location, area 3 (actually 0.25 acre)." The map shows .1 acre. This adds to my suspicion that the map surveyor was trying to represent certain areas as less desirable than they actually are.

The fences of the tennis courts make the impact of fencing for the dog run less intrusive visually.

Alternatives 5 & 6 represent a more spacious possibility.

Question 10: Would consideration be given to a modification of the proposed areas 5&6 following the line starting about 10-20 feet from the corner of the parking lot maintaining a buffer of at least 50-100' from the peace park and extending farther away from the peace park even including a portion of area 6?

Rules to mitigate obvious concerns of the noise disturbing meditations in the Peace garden could establish quiet times and visual blight of a chain link fence in this area could be mitigated with green scrim cloth on the black vinyl coated chain link.

I would like the opportunity to show you the before, during and after photos I have of an Oak woodland meadow that was converted to an off leash dog run.

Question 11: How can I show you pictures and explain the story they tell in person?

I'm very sorry I was unable to attend the scoping meeting, it was scheduled for the same time as my child's parent meeting at school. The conflict emphasizes the disparity of available time that dog owners have compared to parents. We can't leave our children tied up on the porch with a bowl of water while we go off to meetings at night and lobby our govt. officials. One of the many reasons that dog park lobbyists are so successful nationally is that the public land they take comes from a disenfranchised group. The flora and fauna can't speak or vote nor will most children.

Certainly, those who hope to use the dog run are all likely to comment.

Those like myself who don't stand to gain anything either way are much less likely to provide any feedback.

Question 12: Will you weigh the letter writers' motives along with opinions and numbers?

Speaking for the voiceless and the children is much harder than simply barking at you about needing space to unleash some dogs.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of this matter. I look forward to being able to discuss the issues and my photos with the relevant report writers and decision makers at the soonest possible mutually convenient time.

Sincerely Yours,
Andrew J. Levis

From: "Anne Belden" <abelden@d2m.com>
To: <mjulene@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 10/9/03 10:38AM
Subject: Support for Dog Park

To Whom It May Concern,

Please approve the dog park at Ragle Park. I walk my dog at Ragle all the time and, though she is very well behaved and under voice control, keep her on a leash so she doesn't disturb joggers and other park visitors. However, this is really not fair to her. I truly believe this earth was not meant for just humans to control and we need to share with other creatures. A dog park at Ragle is a good place to start and will make thousands of Sonoma County dogs happier and better-socialized creatures.

As you may know, dogs who are socialized with other dogs are much less likely to fight and/or attack people. It is the dogs who are always on leashes, and pulled away from people and dogs that I worry about. Dog parks help young dogs learn how to behave around both dogs and people - off leash.

Thanks for your support.

Anne Belden
Sebastopol
(707) 829-1830

From: "Fran Murphy" <seblue@sonic.net>
To: <mjulene@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 10/9/03 12:30PM
Subject: Dog Park at Ragle

Dear Ms. Julene:

I am writing to express my opinion concerning the proposed dog park at Ragle Ranch Park. I am convinced it is a necessary addition to the park, and one which is in keeping with the park's nature as a community-wide resource. There are significant numbers of dog owners who would utilize this park, as is the case with other such dog parks in this county. I would prefer that at least one half acre be designated for this use, as I know you are looking at various sites under consideration. I think such a size would make it possible for dogs to run loose without causing 'over-use' or problems with too many dogs in a small area. On behalf of all dog lovers and users of the county parks, I respectfully request that you consider this opinion. It is my hope that within a reasonable time, there will be a dog park at Ragle, as it is very much needed and wanted.

Thank you for your anticipated approval of this project.

Fran Murphy
seblue@sonic.net
524 South Main Street,
Sebastopol, CA 95472

From: <GoldenPaw7@aol.com>
To: <mjulene@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 10/9/03 2:37PM
Subject: dog park

Hello, I am Sandi Brown, volunteer Dog Parks Services Coordinator for Santa Rosa, I help set up and manage the dog parks here. A dog park is really needed

in Sebastopol, and Ragle park is a good place. Each of our parks is close to 1/2 acre after expansions and are run by volunteers. We have alot of rules and

guidelines that people must follow in order to use the dog park.* We are adding a 5th park soon at Youth Community Park when the expansion of that park

occurs. I am supportive of having a dog park at Ragle, in a dog friendly area,

hopefully near the parking lot. It will need running water, shade, places for

folks to sit etc.

Here are the rules we use;

***** Welcome to the Dog Play Area

***** At Rincon Valley Community Park

This area has been established as a fun place to exercise dogs off-** leash. To make this privilege work we must all follow the guide lines. Let's make it a safe and fun experience for all.* *

GUIDELINES

*** No kids under 10 years, kids no running with the dogs please***

*** If you have a vicious or aggressive animal, they are not allowed in the area

** No climbing fences, use gates.

** No food in area.

From: "Jenefer Merrill" <jenefermerrill@hotmail.com>
To: <mjulene@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 10/9/03 3:02PM
Subject: support for a dog park in Ragle park

I fully support a dog park in Ragle Park.* However, I feel that a small park is not successful for the dogs.* One of the reasons for having a park is for the dogs to get a good run and the small dog parks do not work for that purpose.* I support the largest plot proposed for that reason.* I personally feel that a dog park should be at least 1 acre or very close to that.

Thank you.

Jenefer Merrill

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sign up now! <http://join.msn.com/?page=dept/dialup>

From: "David and Lynn" <henwer@pon.net>
To: <mjulene@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 10/9/03 6:05PM
Subject: Sebastopol dog park

Sonoma County Regional Parks Department

I am a Sebastopol resident in total support for a dog park. I have 2 dogs and must drive for over 15 minutes to give my dogs the leash free romping they need. A dog park at Ragle is within walking distance. A dog park here would, in addition, give me exercise and spare the air that is now being polluted by my driving. I lived in San Francisco near a dog park and 30 dogs and owners at a could be there together, playing and socializing without a problem. When a more aggressive dog was brought to the park, whoever was at the park negotiated for a peaceful outcome. It worked for both dogs and people.

I urge you to support a dog park in Sebastopol so that our dogs can be properly socialized off leash. My experience is that dogs are most aggressive when on a leash. The only time a dog of mine has ever been bitten was when one of them was walking, on leash, past a dog on an extended leash.

Please let Sebastopol have a place to play.

Respectfully,

Lynn Werner
373 Orchard St.
Sebastopol, CA 95472

From: "GINA FREGOSI" <GTFREGOSI@msn.com>
To: <mjulene@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 10/9/03 6:03PM
Subject: Site for Dog Park at Ragle Ranch

Thank you for taking comments on the above subject.

I strongly urge the Park District to choose the largest site for the fenced in area. This will minimize damage to the park as the ratio of dogs to terrain will be greater. A smaller area will tear up the earth and leave lasting damage.

Also, with such a large area, any loud sounds created by the dogs will be spread out whereas if many dogs (up to 6 to 10 at a time, worse case scenario) are enclosed in a small area, any barking or loud play will be encouraged much like young playful children yelling and screaming louder and louder over eachother.

Finally, the size of the lot will allow the larger dogs to truly run around and exercise, not just visit and do their business on the natural dirt. A healthy animal is a happy animal and as a family member, it makes for a happy family, community, and so on.

Thank you for your attention to these comments.

Sincerely,
Gina Fregosi and Tasmania the Australian Shepherd Mix

From: "GINA FREGOSI" <GTFREGOSI@msn.com>
To: <MJULENE@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 10/10/03 11:02AM
Subject: Re: Site for Dog Park at Ragle Ranch

Dear Michelle,

I wrote in favor of the large site at Ragel Ranch Park.

This will impact the terrain the least as the ratio of dogs to nature is the largest.

Also, the slope will allow for natural water drainage during rainy season.

Thank you.
Gina Fregosi

From: Zeno Swijtink <swijtink@sonoma.edu>
To: Michelle Julene <mjulene@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 10/10/03 5:18AM
Subject: AGVWC comments on Ragle Dog Park

Michelle Julene
Senior Environmental Specialist
Sonoma County Regional Parks Department
2300 County Center Drive, #120A,
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Dear Michele,

Please find attached comments from the Atascadero Creek and Green Valley Creek Watershed Council about the proposed Ragle Dog Park.

Yours,

Dr Zeno G. Swijtink
Atascadero Creek and Green Valley Creek Watershed Council
640 Wagnon Road
Sebastopol, CA 95472

(707) 823-1726

--

The mission of the Atascadero Creek and Green Valley Creek Watershed Council is to bring together the people who live and work in our watershed to help each other in taking responsibility for our impact on the watershed through protection, restoration and education.

October 9, 2003

To: MJULENE@sonoma-county.org

From: Atascadero Green Valley Creek Watershed Council

The Atascadero Green Valley Creek Watershed Council is a grass roots citizen group centered in the Sebastopol area. We are interested in current events and local issues that affect our watershed. Several of our members recently attended the meeting about the Notice of Preparation for the Ragle Ranch Off-leash Dog Area.

Having observed first hand the sites proposed for the off leash dog area in Ragle Park, some of our members are concerned that the dog park will degrade upland areas of the watershed that are currently protected in a natural state in Ragle Park. We are similarly concerned about setting a dangerous precedence to change the Master Plan for Ragle Ranch Park to allow a dog park.

Based on the six areas offered, our opinion is that the least undesirable location is area 3 since it is placed in an area that is already actively developed. We would not support the selection of an area that would take away valuable Oak Woodland habitat since many species are suffering or have already have lost ground and are under high stress in the riparian corridor and uplands of the Atascadero Creek.

Two proposals are adjacent to the Peace Garden. In our opinion, area 6 is the worst selection of all because it puts the off leash dog area in close proximity to Atascadero Creek. A dog area in this location would threaten to diminish the water quality of the creek and wetland areas and take away valuable habitat needed by the numerous species whose lives depend on these sensitive spaces for survival.

We would encourage during this process that you seek a more appropriate site for the off leash dog area outside of Ragle Ranch Park, instead of continuing with a plan to chose an inappropriate site within the undeveloped open meadows and Oak Woodlands that are an important part of the Atascadero Creek watershed and a characteristic hallmark of Ragle Ranch Park. We also encourage you to consider a turfed location in order to protect valuable soils and minimize the possibility of erosion and polluted storm water discharges into the watershed.

We recognize that preserving the scenic beauty and undeveloped land of our watershed for the benefit of all of Sonoma County is at times a difficult task. As our population grows, the pressure to develop these public open spaces also grows. We ask you to consider that long term benefits gained by preserving and restoring our watershed now and in the future far outweighs the benefit to the users of an off leash dog area. It is important in your decision to take "just one more piece of the park for development" that you remember that Ragle Park serves as an island of important riparian and upland habitat in an area of dense urban and agricultural development.

The truth is that we are losing the beautiful, naturalized open spaces of Ragle Ranch Park piece by piece, year by year. Here a little, there a little, and soon we will not wake up anymore to the presence of the wild around us.

Sincerely,

Dr Zeno G. Swijtink
Atascadero Creek and Green Valley Creek Watershed Council
640 Wagon Road
Sebastopol, CA 95472

(707) 823-1726

The mission of the Atascadero Creek and Green Valley Creek Watershed Council is to bring together the people who live and work in our watershed to help each other in taking responsibility for our impact on the watershed through protection, restoration and education.

From: "Arlene Kallen" <arlene@sonoma.lib.ca.us>
To: <MJULENE@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 10/10/03 8:43AM
Subject: More Comments for Ragle Initial Study

Hi Michele,

I just wanted to add some comments to what I have already mailed in. I hope you got that by now - please call me 584-9121 ext. 5 if you haven't and I will e-mail them to you. Thanks - Arlene

October 10, 2003

To: Sonoma County Regional Parks
From: Arlene Kallen , 640 Vine Ave, Sebastopol, CA
Re: Comments for Initial Environmental Study for Off Leash Area in Ragle Park

As I wrote previously, I think that Ragle has already had enough development in the active use side of the park. Taking land from the few natural areas that remain undeveloped on that side will negatively impact those of us who enjoy recreating there.

This project contradicts the Master Plan and I would like the Initial Study to address the issue of piecemeal development of the Park within the Habitat Areas the Plan outlines.

One of the "Goals and Policies" of the Plan is: To preserve and enhance, where appropriate, the open-space and wildlife habitat values of the land (p.1) To that end, the Plan included the recommended management plan as outlined in the Initial Environmental Study that was done at the time. One of the reasons the Plan wanted resources to be managed that way because: 2. The area surrounding the park continues to infill with development, making it more and more of a resource "island". (p.6)

The Plan places a high value on maintaining and preserving each of the plant and wildlife habitats located in Ragle, the grassland, wet meadow, oak woodland, mixed riparian community and open riparian woodland. This dog park project and Veteran's Gathering Place in the open space western side, where the Parks Dept. has just put 6,000 sq. ft of asphalt concrete, rows of benches, flagpoles, and non-native flowering crabapple trees, are evidence of the Parks Department's willingness to disregard the Plan when a special interest group finds a "use" for a habitat area and has the money to develop that "use". The cumulative impact of past, current, and future projects that special groups pressure Parks Dept to develop is the piecemeal destruction of the natural resources of the park. Bit by bit, the goal of preserving and enhancing habitat value of the park is ignored, and the visitors park experience is degraded.

Now more than ever, it is important that the Master Plan be followed. The population of Sonoma County has increased from 299,000 in 1980 to 464,000 in 2001 and in the 20 years since the Plan was adopted more development has occurred on land near the park. Some properties

adjacent to the park have been converted from orchards which are wildlife friendly to vineyards which are securely fenced, kept weed and tree free, and are therefore very wildlife unfriendly. Other parcels have been cleared of trees for large homes with non-native landscaping. Wild turkeys have been introduced and are voraciously foraging, competing with quail and other ground nesting birds.

Ragle Park clearly demonstrates that it "has great biological significance relative to the surrounding land." It is certainly a fact, as the EIS for the Master Plan states:

" . . . as the trend toward urban development continues, the habitat value of the protected park will increase. Ultimately, the park may provide an "island of relatively undisturbed native vegetation within an urbanized setting" (p.34)

We enjoy that island and want it to remain that way for future generations.

From: Wendy Krupnick <wendyk@pon.net>
To: <MJULENE@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 10/10/03 11:46AM
Subject: Ragle Ranch dog park

Michele Julene
Sonoma County Regional Parks

Dear Ms. Julene,

I am writing because I am very concerned about the proposed dog park in Ragle Ranch. I love dogs and sympathize with dog owners, and I am also a frequent user of Ragle Ranch Park. As a farmer, environmentalist, and active member of California Native Plant Society, I am aware of the soil and habitat of the Ranch and believe that the proposed sites would cause harm to the beautiful and fragile ecosystem there. Such high impact use as dog runs, (like active sports), should occur on turf which would protect the soil from erosion.

I would like to request that additional meetings be held to begin discussions to find the best and most appropriate dog park site in West County through a process of consensus, not conflict.

I do not believe that Ragle Ranch is an appropriate site for a dog park and other sites should be considered that are flat and would have irrigated turf.

Regional Parks must uphold the current Master Plan for Ragle Ranch Park and not amend the plan every time it is approached by the desires of special interest groups. The Park must be protected and restored for the benefit of future generations.

In addition, I am concerned about the continued loss of wildflower meadows due to development within the park and would like to see a boardwalk in the meadow which becomes a wetland during the rainy season. There should be a program to protect and restore these areas.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns.

Sincerely yours,
Wendy Krupnick
4993 B. Occidental Rd.
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Ragle Ranch Regional Park
PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

Name: Leslie Gattmann 10/11/02
Address: 8040 Whited Rd Seb.
e-mail: lgattmann@aol.com

Are you on the mailing list already? ☒ yes ☐ no **NOTE: The mailing list is public information**

Comments: I have 2 dogs & I don't think that there
needs to be a special "dog park". I don't want to
see the beautiful open spaces & wildflowers
destroyed by the dogs. There is plenty of space
for dogs to exercise at Ragle & owners don't
always have good judgement re: their dogs
behavior. Everyone is safer w/ dogs on leash

Ragle Ranch Regional Park
PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

Name: Marsha Rose 10/16/03
Address: 8248 Vally View Dr
e-mail: LOSE@jps.net

Are you on the mailing list already? ☐ yes ☒ no **NOTE: The mailing list is public information**

Comments: _____

I highly approve of an off-leash area at Ragle
I would love to see areas #1 #2 #6 and/or
#4 developed. #6 would be my preference

Thank you

Ragle Ranch Regional Park
PROPOSED OFF-LEASH DOG AREA

Please write your comments on this card and return to the Regional Parks Department

Name: Magat, Margaret 10/21
Address: P.O. Box 208, Sebastopol 95473
e-mail: _____

Are you on the mailing list already? ☒ yes ☐ no **NOTE: The mailing list is public information**

Comments: Alternative site 5 & Alternative site 3
are sites which I believe least impact
Ragle's natural environment.
I would like to request that please do not
put the site in the woodland area. This
would ruin the beauty of the park
& lessen its appeal.

From: Rubin <rubinseb@sonic.net>
To: <MJULENE@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 10/11/03 6:18PM
Subject: Ragle Park

I would like to add my voice to those that have concerns regarding the creation of a dog park in Ragle Ranch Park. The undeveloped areas of the park are critical areas in terms of wildlife habitat, and I feel that destroying the remaining oak habitat and grasslands would be poor stewardship and a sacrifice of the legacy we owe future generations.

Please use your position and authority as senior environmental specialist wisely in deciding on this issue.

Thank-you,
Monique Rubin

From: hlibeu <hlibeu@sonic.net>
To: <MJULENE@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 10/12/03 6:23PM
Subject: Ragle Dog Park

I am a dog owner, but I consider it LUNACY to establish a free-run dog park. Anywhere--though that location seems to be particularly bad.

I've been trying to visualize how the park would work. If I were to go there with my 35-pound dog, how would we fare with the larger dogs--would there be dog fights, would I be knocked over (I am elderly). Would I even WANT to go there after several years of having the dogs deposit their leavings any and everywhere ? Please remember that dogs can actually kill people, as that poor LaCrosse coach, Diane Whipple, learned. But without any such tragic event, or anywhere near it, I wonder why the taxpayer should produce any such facility for dog owners. Who pays for the liability insurance?

Helen Libeu

CC: <agv-watershedcouncil@egroups.com>

From: Linda Kelley <lkelley@sonic.net>
To: Michelle Julene <mjulene@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 10/22/03 12:09PM
Subject: Ragle Dog Park sites

After touring Ragle Park, I think the only possibly acceptable location is #3. It is located near a chain linked tennis court in an area already developed, is easily accessible, is close to parking and water (and therefore a turfed surface could be maintained which may be preferable to dirt or other landscaping for urine odor and dust control in the dry months), and will cause minimal impact to the rest of the park leaving the other natural areas undisturbed. Dogs don't care where their park is and will appreciate any off leash area. This site is of sufficient size for such a dog run and most other dog parks I visited are this size. I know the dog park supporters say this is too small for their grand plans, but the rest of the uses for Ragle Park must be maintained.

This site will prevent 'loss of scenic view due to fencing, loss of public open space, loss of passive recreational uses in the upper park for all park users, including the disabled and others not able to access the lower trails, loss and impacts to important wildlife habitat, noise disturbance and loss of lupine and poppy wildflower meadows, to name a few. It is clear that fragile soils exposed on the sloped, open meadows cannot tolerate repeated trampling in the dog park without creating problems with dust, mud, erosion and stormwater discharges'.

Could you please include me your email updates about this Dog Park process.

Thank you,

Linda Kelley
Sebastopol Vice Mayor
(707) 824-1674
lkelley@sonic.net

From: <Kishmirian@aol.com>
To: <mreilly@sonoma-county.org>, <mjulene@sonoma-county.org>, <jobob@sonic.net>, <arlenekal@yahoo.com>
Date: 10/27/03 7:50PM
Subject: Dog site at Ragle

I support the protection of the open, scenic, naturalized areas of Ragle Ranch Park. Having a dog park there would destroy these areas.

I have been a landscape contractor in Sonoma County since 1980 and speaking from personal experience, dogs are very destructive to the landscape setting. They destroy the turf and grassland not only from their constant running back and forth but they are diggers usually going after gophers. What was once a small gopher mound ends up being a rather good size hole. Enough of these good size holes and trampled paths is going to lead to an erosion problem. And we know there are gophers at Ragle. Lots of them.

I think you should consider this in your decision.

Nick Kishmirian
Kishmirian Landscape Co. Lic#394188

From: Jo Bentz and Bob Herr <jobob@sonic.net>
To: <mreilly@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 11/3/03 2:54PM
Subject: Request for a Consensus Process- Ragle Ranch Dog Park

Dear Supervisor Reilly-

I would like to ask if there is any support for the use of the consensus process for the proposed Ragle Ranch dog park project?

Several weeks ago I asked Michelle Julene, Sonoma County Regional Parks, the following question-

"Will Regional Parks allow meetings with representatives from both sides of the issue to work on community consensus, rather than conflict, during the environmental review process?"

Michelle Julene forwarded my request to her supervisor, Philip Sales at Sonoma County Regional Parks and the simple answer back was "no".

I am sending this email to you because I do not believe that the Initial Study process alone will be able to address the larger issues of conflict in the community about the dog park. The Initial Study process allows formal public comment, but not open and safe dialogue between interested parties, as the consensus process would. If you have been reading the various editorials and letters in Sonoma West, you are aware that the proposed Ragle Ranch dog park is controversial and has become an emotional and conflicted issue in the community. However, I believe that with a consensus process, we could easily find common ground with people on both sides of the issue. Even one or two facilitated meetings among opposing parties during the environmental review process could help greatly toward a community based solution about the dog park.

Recently, I spoke with Annette Townley, Executive Director of the North Bay Consensus Council (NBCC), about the proposed Ragle Ranch dog park project. NBCC is currently doing a great job in using consensus for the Graton Labor Hall project. Annette indicated to me that she thought the dog park project would be appropriate for consensus and that their group may be willing to work on it.

Thank you for considering this- Jo Bentz

CC: <mjulene@sonoma-county.org>, <atownley@aol.com>, Linda Kelley <lkelley@sonic.net>

Michelle Julene - Proposed Dog Park at Ragle Ranch

From: Jo Bentz and Bob Herr <jobob@sonic.net>
To: Michele Julene <mjulene@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 2/2/2004 9:58 AM
Subject: Proposed Dog Park at Ragle Ranch
CC: Supervisor Mike Reilly <mreilly@sonoma-county.org>, Linda Kelley <lkelley@sonic.net>, Philip Sales <PSALES@sonoma-county.org>, <neelm@rb1.swrcb.ca.gov>

Dear Michelle-

In November 2003, you sent me an e mail with information about the proposed dog park at Ragle Ranch. In the email you stated, "our agreement with the consultant does not include an Alternative Site 7, and as such, it will not be included in the Initial Study."

As you are aware, I am recommending inclusion of Alternative #7, a site located between the entrance driveway of Ragle Ranch Park and the new parking lot. The reasons I support this site are below:

- 1) Alternative 7 has been proposed publicly as an acceptable alternative site by Friends of the West County dog park. Alternative 7 is also supported by people like me who oppose the dog park at Ragle, including people who asked the county to prepare an initial study.
- 2) Alternative 7 is a good compromise for both groups. It allows the dog park supporters to use Ragle Ranch without having to buy expensive private property and also allows the supporters to piggyback onto the county's insurance. By allowing the dog park to be sited at Ragle in the already developed park of the park, those of us who oppose the alternatives in the the natural areas (alternatives 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6) find Alternative 7 much easier to accept and support.
- 3) Alternative 7 is near Ragle Road in the area amended for active use in the 1993 Amendment. I do not think that the Master Plan for Ragle Ranch would not have to be amended if Alternative 7 is chosen. This is a big plus for those of us opposing the dog park. This is because, as a group, we do not want to see the continued conversion of natural, passive-use, open space areas of the park to active uses.

The "process" of the Initial Study should provide Alternatives that work for the community. The process should not be inflexible and ridged. So many people in this community are concerned and involved in the outcome of the dog park. This is evident by the number of comments the county received during the scoping session both for and against the dog park.

I believe that Alternative 7 would provide the best fit solution to this complex issue. Please reconsider your decision and allow Alternative 7 to be included in the sites considered for the proposed dog park at Ragle Ranch.

Thank you for your consideration-

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Michelle Julene - Jim Angelo, Director

From: Robert Leverant <robert@monitor.net>
To: <parks@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 11/7/2003 4:37 PM
Subject: Jim Angelo, Director
CC: Robert Leverant <robert@monitor.net>

Dear Jim,

In this time of budget crunch, such that you are asking for volunteers to help out and for funds to make up the severe shortfall, I find it nothing short of astonishing that you are planning to build a dog park in Ragle Ranch Park. This will be a very high maintenance.

To this property owner this seems a misuse of funds and priorities. Who is going to clean this park. Who approved that scarce funds could go to meet the EIR, a report normally paid for by a special group like Friends of the Dog Park who is specifically lobbied for and going to benefit from the addition.

Who approved this expenditure?

Who is going to use it? Many, if not most dog owners won't, refuse to, take their pets to a fenced in dog park. Why? The unleashed dogs become aggressive and attack one another. There they pass on contagious diseases.

Anyway, while I like to contribute to Sonoma County causes, I'm opting out on the above because of what I've written. It seems truly fatuous to be asking for money and building a high maintenance addition at this time.

Yours ,

Robert Leverant
471 S. High Street
Sebastopol, CA

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Jo Bentz
9990 Graton Road
Sebastopol, CA 95472

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Michelle Julene - RE: Proposed Dog Park at Ragle Ranch

From: "Andrew 'A.J.' Levis" <ecocontractor@earthlink.net>
To: "Michele Julene" <mjulene@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 2/2/2004 6:09 PM
Subject: RE: Proposed Dog Park at Ragle Ranch
CC: "Linda Kelley" <lkelley@sonic.net>, "Supervisor Mike Reilly" <mreilly@sonoma-county.org>

I've recently been made aware of an alternative site #7.

Your Environmental Review consultants may need to amend their contract to include consideration of another site and that may strain an already stressed budget.

Perhaps one or two or more of the other areas could be considered less stringently or a time and material used analysis of the contract should yield the funding needed for the 7th alternative to be considered.

The \$35,000 raised for the dog park has not been exhausted and could quite likely be tapped for what may be the best possible alternative.

Although I still contend that rotating the dog run area to different private yards is more appropriate than designating public land for pets to exercise, I feel that area 7 could be an acceptable compromise.

Please explain to me your reluctance to consider such a fine idea.

Yours truly,
A.J. Levis
Sonoma County Taxpayer and registered voter
Sebastopol, CA 95472

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YES! I want to help preserve, protect and enhance our county parks. Enclosed is my donation to the Sonoma County Regional Parks Foundation

☐ \$25 ☐ \$35 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ Other _____
☐ Check Enclosed Charge my: ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

Account # _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____
Name BECAUSE OF YOU PLANNING A DOG PARK
Address HIGH (I VOLUNTEER) MAINTENANCE IN RAGLE
City I ASKING FOR FUNDS State _____ ZIP _____
Thank You!
NO FUNDS FROM ME!



April 1, 2004

Arlene and Brad Kallen
640 Vine Avenue,
Sebastopol, CA 95472

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Kallen:

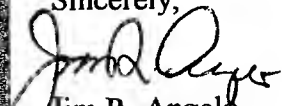
I am in receipt of your e-mail dated March 29, 2004. The purpose of this correspondence is to update you regarding the status of the proposed Off-Leash Dog Area at Ragle Ranch Regional Park and to clarify the Regional Parks Department's obligation regarding public involvement in the park planning process.

While the Regional Parks Department encourages positive public involvement in the park planning process, it should be clearly understood that there is no legal or regulatory requirement to notify and include the public in every aspect of the planning process, including meetings with interested parties on a particular project.

The Regional Parks Department conducted a Public Scoping Meeting at Ragle Ranch Regional Park on September 25, 2003. This public meeting was not required by CEQA or by any other law or regulation, but was conducted voluntarily to obtain public comment about the project and the six alternative sites under consideration. The meeting was noticed broadly to the public. At this meeting, you and members of your group opposed to the original proposed location of the off-leash dog area provided your opinions and ideas. Regrettably at that same meeting no member of the Peace Garden Committee was able to attend. As a follow up we invited the Peace Garden representatives to meet with Parks staff to get their views on the two alternative sites, #5 and #6, that would have the greatest impact to the existing Peace Garden. The project proponents were invited to attend the same meeting to provide background information and be available to answer any specific questions that the Peace Garden Committee representatives might have. Although your interest in the future of an off-leash dog area at Ragle Ranch Park and your desire to be kept informed of progress on the issue is recognized, it is not practical or required to notice all meetings to the public.

Thank you again for your interest in Ragle Ranch Regional Park. You will be notified of the Environmental Review Committee meeting after it is scheduled.

Sincerely,


Jim R. Angelo
Director

cc: Supervisor Mike Reilly
Philip Sales
Michelle Julene
Mark Cleveland

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Michelle Julene - "Private" meeting at Ragle Ranch Park

From: Arlene Kallen <arlenekal@yahoo.com>
To: Jim Angelo <jangelo@sonoma-county.org>
Date: 3/29/2004 8:36 AM
Subject: "Private" meeting at Ragle Ranch Park
CC: Mark Cleveland <mclevela@sonoma-county.org>, michele Julene <mjulene@sonoma-county.org>, Linda Kelley <lkelley@sonic.net>, Mike Reilly <mreilly@sonoma-county.org>, Philip Sales <psales@sonoma-county.org>

Dear Mr. Angelo,

We are still very much interested in the public process that will determine if and where an off leash area will be placed at Ragle Ranch Park. We recently learned that on February 10, Regional Parks planning staff met at the park with board members of Friends of the Dog Park and representatives from the Peace Garden to discuss dog park sites proposed in the Initial Study. We wonder why, if the selection of a dog park site in Ragle is a CEQA driven public process, in part paid for by taxpayer money, this meeting was not announced, or information summarized and distributed to other Interested parties (such as ourselves).

As members of the community we have repeatedly asked that, regarding issues with the proposed dog park, all views be represented "at the table" so that there is a transparent, democratic process compatible with the Initial Study. We are concerned that by allowing one part of the community to participate in aspects of the initial study process that other members are excluded from is not in line with CEQA guidelines. The fact that special interest groups are meeting with Parks and Rec staff without the rest of us who have commented on the Initial Study and are very much involved with the proposal disturbs us greatly.

We understand the Initial Study is still under way. If there are going to be any other meetings regarding siting of the dog park before the Draft Initial Study is released, we think that all the people who sent in public comments should be notified.

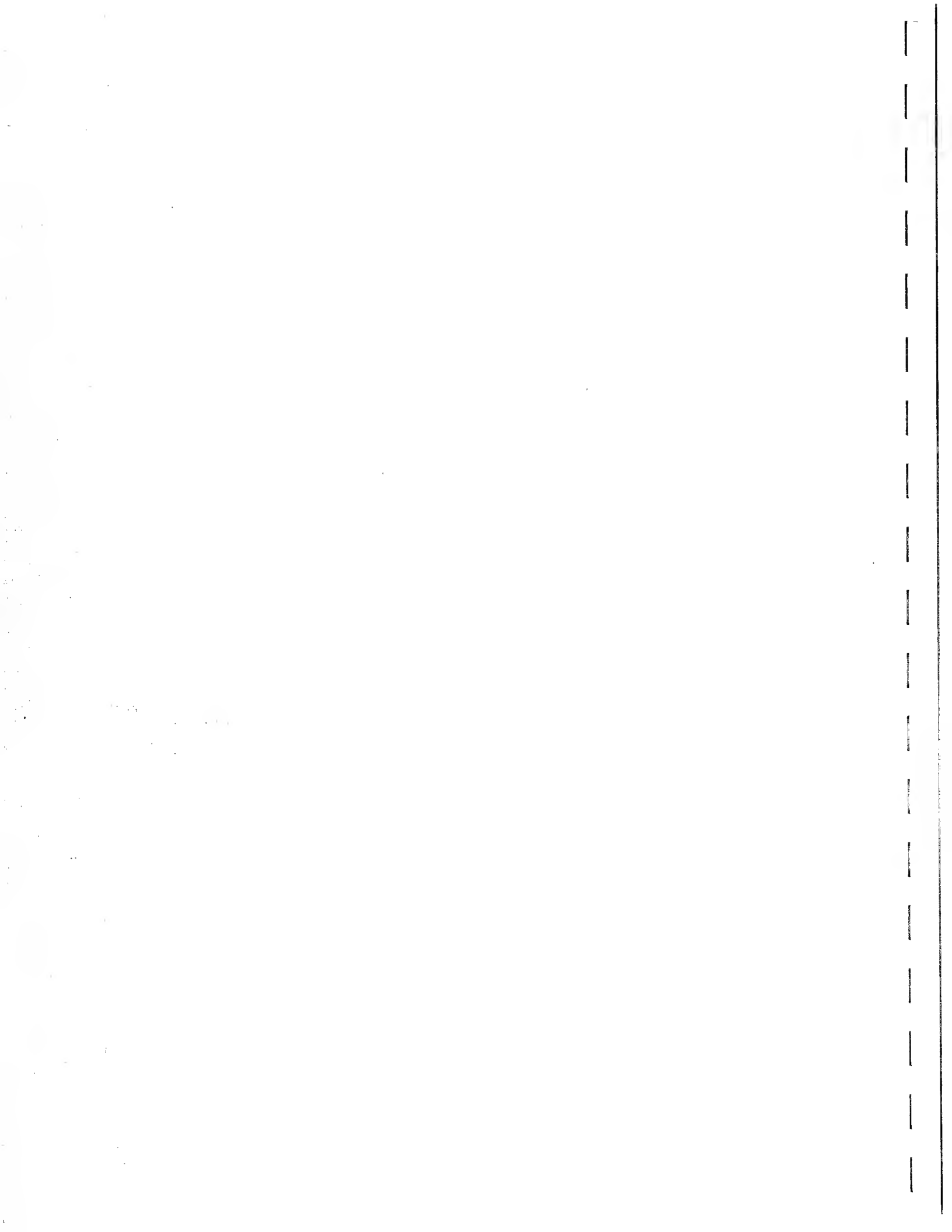
Sincerely,

Arlene and Brad Kallen
640 Vine Ave.
Sebastopol, CA 95472
823-9552

18/



APPENDIX C:
MITIGATION MONITORING PROGRAM



MITIGATION MONITORING PROGRAM

Pursuant to Section 21081.6 of the State CEQA Guidelines,¹ the mitigation measures listed in the Proposed Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP) are to be implemented as part of the proposed project. The Proposed MMP identifies the time at which each mitigation measure is to be implemented and the person or department responsible for implementation. The initials of the designated responsible person will indicate completion of their portion of the mitigation measure. The Regional Parks Environmental Specialist or Park Planner's signature on the Certification of Compliance will indicate complete implementation of the Proposed MMP.

The mitigation measures included in the Proposed MMP are considered conditions of approval of the proposed project. The Regional Parks Department agrees to implement the mitigation measures proposed in the MMP. Implementation of the mitigation measures included in the Proposed MMP is expected to avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, or compensate potentially significant impacts to a less than significant level.

Time of Implementation

Project Design:	The mitigation measure will be incorporated into the project design and/or included in the project specifications and contract special provisions prior to awarding a construction project.
Construction:	The mitigation measure will be implemented during construction.
Post Construction:	The mitigation measure will be implemented after project construction.

Responsible Persons and Departments

The Regional Parks Department Environmental Specialist and Project Planner will be responsible for the overall implementation of the MMP. Generally, the Regional Parks Department Environmental Specialist and Project Planner will sign off on the mitigation measures included in the MMP. Periodically, staff of other County departments or regulatory agencies will be involved in the implementation of specific mitigation measures. In these instances, the staff, department, or agency will be identified in the MMP.

Certification of Compliance

The Regional Parks Department Environmental Specialist and Park Planner will be responsible for providing signatures on the Certification of Compliance. The Certification of Compliance is a double-check to ensure that the MMP was fully implemented.

Record Keeping

The Regional Parks Department Environmental Specialist and Project Planner will maintain the records of the MMP. When the MMP is fully implemented, the original signed copy will be maintained in the official Project Binder.

¹ California Code of Regulations Title 14.

CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE

Complete the Certification of Compliance after mitigation measures have all been initialed. Use this Certification of Compliance to ensure the full implementation of each mitigation measure.

Design

The Regional Parks Department Environmental Specialist and/or the Project Planner has reviewed the project design, the plans, and the contract special provisions to verify that designated mitigation measures have been incorporated.

Regional Parks staff signature & job title

Date

- ☐ A1 Aesthetics
- ☐ CR1 Cult. Resources
- ☐ CR2 Cult. Resources
- ☐ CR3 Cult. Resources
- ☐ WQ1 Water Quality

Construction

The Regional Parks Department Environmental Specialist and/or the Project Planner has verified that designated mitigation measures were implemented during construction.

Regional Parks staff signature & job title

Date

- ☐ A1 Aesthetics
- ☐ CR1 Cult. Resources
- ☐ CR2 Cult. Resources
- ☐ CR3 Cult. Resources

Post-Construction

The Regional Parks Department Environmental Specialist and/or the Project Planner has verified that designated mitigation measures were implemented after construction. Mitigation measures pertaining to maintenance activities have been forwarded to the Regional Parks maintenance department.

Regional Parks staff signature & job title

Date

- ☐ A1 Aesthetics
- ☐ GS1 Geo. Resources
- ☐ WQ1 Water Quality
- ☐ N1 Noise

AESTHETICS

A1 *To minimize visual impacts to the Peace Garden, planting is included in the project to create a visual screen between the Peace Garden and the off-leash dog area. Such planting must be maintained and irrigated until established to ensure success of the visual screening.*

Implementation & Monitoring

Project Design: Regional Parks staff will verify that the mitigation measure is incorporated into the project design and/or included in the project specifications and contract special provisions prior to awarding a construction project.

Initials

Date

Construction: Regional Parks staff will verify that the mitigation measure is implemented during construction by having a qualified staff person present during ground disturbing work.

Initials

Date

Post-Construction: Regional Parks staff will verify that the mitigation measure is implemented after construction by inspecting the project site during routine park monitoring and maintenance and by monitoring survival of planted screening materials.

Initials

Date

CULTURAL RESOURCES

CR1 *The project plans and specifications shall provide that in the event prehistoric-era or historic-era archaeological site indicators are unearthed during the course of grading, excavation and/or trenching, all ground disturbing work in the vicinity of the discovery shall cease and all exposed materials shall be left in place. Prehistoric-era archaeological site indicators could include chipped chert and obsidian tools and tool manufacture waste flakes, grinding implements such as mortars and pestles, and locally darkened soil containing the previously mentioned items as well as fire altered stone and dietary debris such as bone and shellfish fragments. Historic-era archaeological site indicators could include items of ceramic, glass and metal, and features such as structural ruins, wells and pits containing such artifacts. After cessation of excavation, the contractor shall immediately contact Regional Parks. Regional Parks shall contact a qualified professional archaeologist immediately after the find. Such archaeologist shall conduct an evaluation of significance of the site, and assess the necessity for appropriate mitigation. The contractor shall not resume construction activities until authorization to proceed is received from Regional Parks.*

Implementation & Monitoring

Project Design: Regional Parks staff will verify that the mitigation measure is incorporated into the project design and/or included in the project specifications and contract special provisions prior to awarding a construction project.

Initials

Date

Construction: Regional Parks staff will verify that the mitigation measure is implemented during construction by having a qualified staff person present during ground disturbing work.

Initials

Date

CR2 *The project plans and specifications shall provide that in the event paleontological site indicators are unearthed during the course of grading, excavation and/or trenching, all ground disturbing work in the vicinity of the discovery shall cease and all exposed materials shall be left in place. After cessation of excavation, the contractor shall immediately contact Regional Parks. Regional Parks shall contact a qualified professional geologist or paleontologist immediately after the find. Such consultant shall conduct an evaluation of significance of the site, and assess the necessity for appropriate mitigation. The contractor shall not resume construction activities until authorization to proceed is received from Regional Parks.*

Implementation & Monitoring

Project Design: Regional Parks staff will verify that the mitigation measure is incorporated into the project design and/or included in the project specifications and contract special provisions prior to awarding a construction project.

Initials

Date

Construction: Regional Parks staff will verify that the mitigation measure is implemented during construction by having a qualified staff person present during ground disturbing work.

Initials

Date

CR3 *If human remains are encountered during grading, excavation or trenching, all construction activity shall cease and the contractor shall immediately contact Regional Parks and the Sonoma County Coroner's Office. If the remains are determined by the Coroner's Office to be of Native American origin, the Native American Heritage Commission shall be contacted and the procedures outlined in CEQA §15064.5(e) shall be implemented by Regional Parks or their designee.*

Implementation & Monitoring

Project Design: Regional Parks staff will verify that the mitigation measure is incorporated into the project design and/or included in the project specifications and contract special provisions prior to awarding a construction project.

Initials

Date

Construction: Regional Parks staff will verify that the mitigation measure is implemented during construction by having a qualified staff person present during ground disturbing work.

Initials

Date

GEOLOGY & SOILS

GS1 *Regional Parks will ultimately be responsible for maintenance of the dog area. Should routine monitoring associated with maintenance indicate that soil erosion is becoming problematic or that excessive dust is generated due to lack of groundcover or dry soils, the dog area will be closed for use until the vegetative groundcover has recovered and erosion is no longer problematic. The dog area shall be subject to closure for recovery at the discretion of Regional Parks.*

Implementation & Monitoring

Post-Construction: Regional Parks staff will verify that the mitigation measure is implemented after construction by inspecting the project site during routine park monitoring and maintenance and noting surface conditions.

Initials

Date

NOISE

N1 *Reservations for the Peace Garden for large group use made at least two weeks in advance would include closure of the off-leash dog area for the duration of the reservation. Regional Parks staff would post notice of the pending closure at the kiosks at the entrance to Ragle Park and at the off-leash dog area when reservation for the Peace Garden or gazebo is made. The gate to the odd-leash dog area will be closed and locked prior to commencement of the reservation period.*

Implementation & Monitoring

Post-Construction: Regional Parks staff will verify that the mitigation measure is implemented after construction ensuring that reservation of the Peace Garden or gazebo includes closure of the off-leash dog area.

Initials

Date

